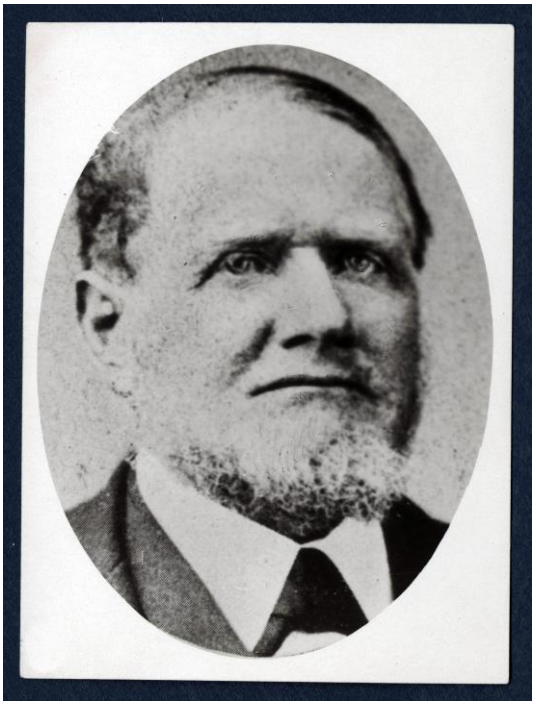

THE LIFE OF SIMEON ATWOOD

1814-1889

By Kim A. Bateman
Simeon's 3rd great grandson

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Introduction

I was lucky enough to personally know my father's grandfather, James Alphonso Bateman, before he died when I was eleven years old, and I possess several letters that he wrote to my family. But his wife, Parylee Pixton, died a week after my parents' marriage, and all I knew of her were the stories of her cooking, especially her famous pies, her home that was a "model of cleanliness, order, and friendliness," and the way that her massive weight rocked Great Grandpa Bateman's big open Nash touring car when she stepped on the running board.

My hobby since retirement has been to write historical biographies of my ancestors, and my interest in Parylee was part of what spurred me to investigate the Pixton family history. I began by writing about Parylee's mother-in-law, Elizabeth Cooper Pixton, after I had done what I could with the Bateman line. But that was Parylee's in-laws, and I quickly realized that I knew nothing at all about her family, the Atwoods.

I soon found several brief biographies of her grandfather and some of his sons posted in *FamilySearch* and on *Ancestry*, but they contain significant gaps and contradictions. My interest was whetted when I learned that her grandfather, Simeon Atwood, was born in Mendon, New York where he could possibly have known Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball before any of them were Mormons. And then I wondered when and how the Atwoods finally joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and why the family lingered so many years in Pennsylvania before coming to Utah. I was hooked. And now you are reading my response.

Thanks to the many of you who have provided memories, sources, and collaborative notes in *FamilySearch* from which I have drawn, and also to my wife, Linda, for her patience, advice, and proofreading. I am especially grateful for the careful documentation of Endowment House records that some of you have provided. I think you will find that I have been able to fill some of the gaps, but I have not filled as many as I had hoped. Maybe I've even created more questions than I have answered. I'm not fully satisfied, but grateful to have learned much, and I hope that you will find this story interesting. Surely some of you (most of whom who are probably my cousins) will take issue with parts of this story. Please feel free to contact me with any comments, corrections, or additions.

February 26, 2023

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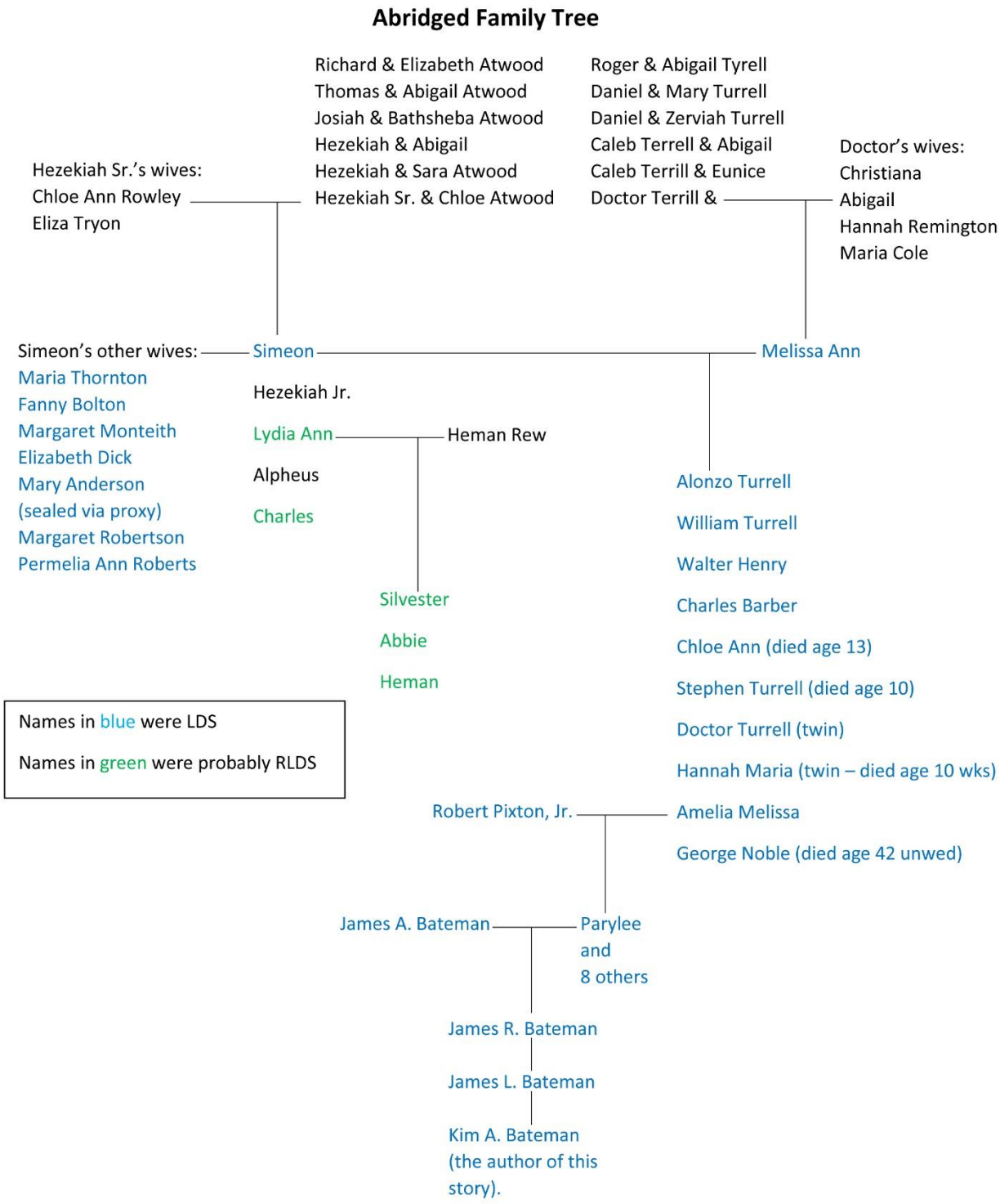
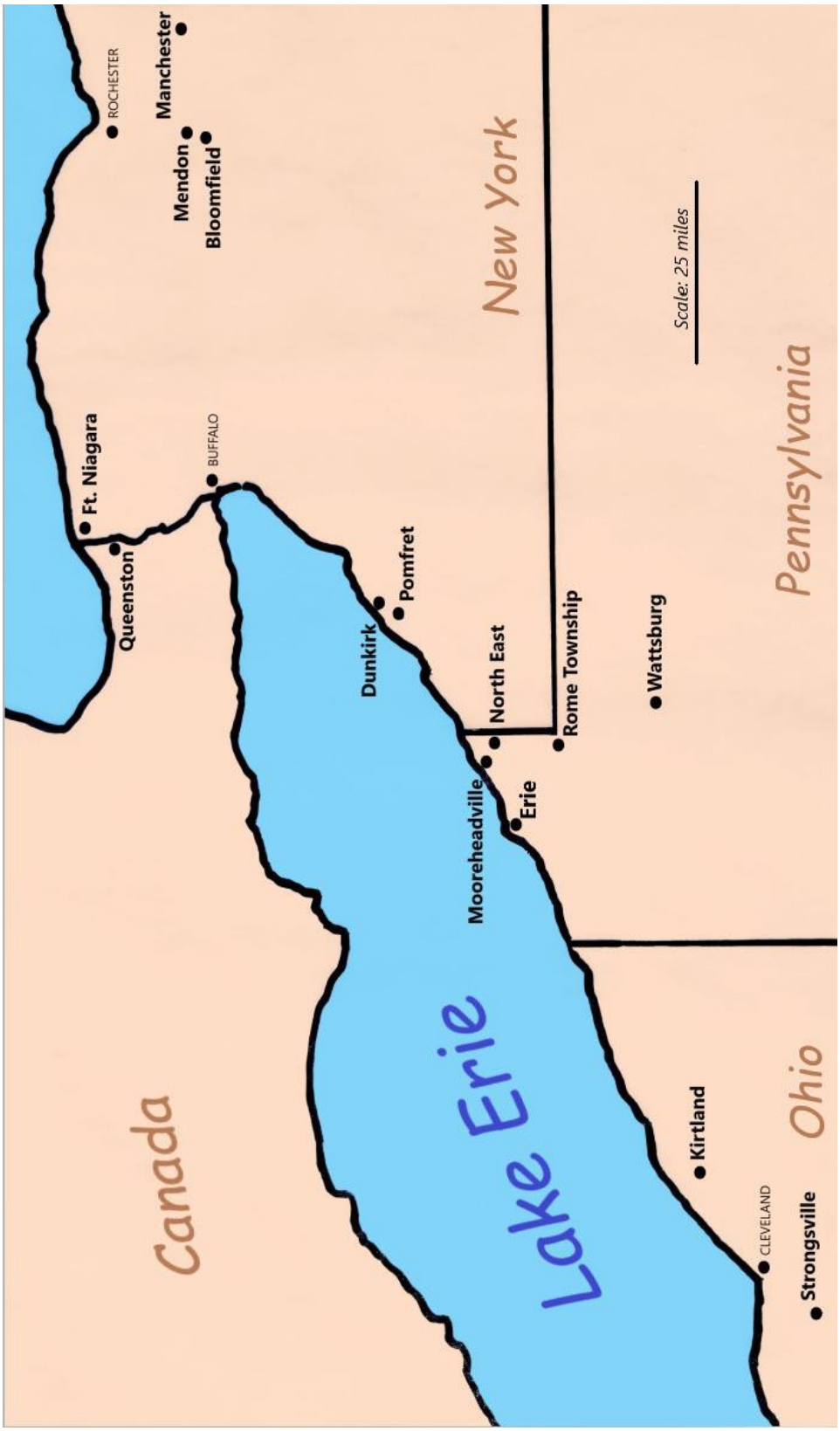
Family Tree and Maps



Atwood and Turrell Family Origins

Important Locations in Simeon's Early Life



Chapter 1 -- Simeon's Parents: Hezekiah Atwood and Chloe Ann Rowley

The War of 1812 was declared by Congress on June 18, 1812, for causes that were multiple and complex including international trade issues and the British practice of raiding American merchant ships to impress soldiers into the Royal Navy. Some Americans opposed the war, especially New Englanders, and Hezekiah Atwood was from Massachusetts, but five weeks after the declaration, Hezekiah[1] was enlisted into the U.S. Army by Lieutenant Marten in East Bloomfield, New York.[2] That he volunteered is not surprising—his father had fought in the Revolutionary War.

How and when Hezekiah and his older brother Solomon ended up in East Bloomfield is a long story, and exactly when they arrived is not entirely clear.

Tyringham, Massachusetts, formerly known as Township #1, was settled in 1739. It was originally a Shaker colony in what was then called Hampshire County. By the time that the boys' father, Hezekiah III, was born there in 1787, there were 182 dwellings and 40 businesses including two tanneries, four potash works, two iron works, and four grist and sawmills.[3] The Shakers had left Tyringham in 1875, and Berkshire County was on the western side of the Berkshire Mountains at the crossroads of settlers on the move. People moving west from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and occasionally southern New Hampshire and Vermont would converge there. Many would continue west into New York state or up the western side of Vermont, following the first roads that allowed travel through this region.[4]

The boys' grandfather (Hezekiah II) had moved to Hop Creek in Tyringham at around the age of two from Wethersfield, Connecticut[5] around 1766 with their great grandfather's (Hezekiah I) family. Atwoods had lived in Wethersfield for three generations before moving up the Connecticut River to the frontier of Western Massachusetts. Simeon's 3rd great grandfather, Captain Thomas Attwood, had settled in Wethersfield around 1663, arriving from the Plymouth Colony, where he had immigrated from England around 1650 at the age of 40, newly retired from Oliver Cromwell's cavalry. The captain had never been married before his move to Wethersfield, but at the age of 59 he married Abigail Anne Kilborne, a girl of 17, whom he supposedly had seen as a baby in arms at the first house he stayed in after coming to the new world. In Wethersfield he built a brick mansion and engaged in the West India trade, became a medical doctor, and owned much land. Captain Attwood is said to have taken part in four great battles between the Puritans and the King including at Marston Moor, July 2, 1644, taking

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[1] Hezekiah is known in *FamilySearch* and *Ancestry* as Hezekiah III. For the sake of simplicity, in this story I will call him Hezekiah and his second son Hezekiah Jr. His father remains Hezekiah II, and his grandfather is Hezekiah I.
[2] This location was given in Hezekiah's deposition while applying for a veteran's land grant at Fort Winnebago, Wisconsin on December 22, 1859. His army records report his enlistment variously as Victor and Canandaigua. All three locations are adjacent townships in Ontario, County, whose borders have changed.
[3] Rev. Chester Dewey, *History of the County of Berkshire, Massachusetts*, Samuel W. Bush Printer, 1829, p. 8.
[4] *FamilySearch* Wiki.
[5] Wethersfield, situated on the Connecticut River, was founded in 1634 by a puritan party of ten men. It is the oldest town in Connecticut. Its last witch trial was held in 1669.

York for the Parliamentarians.[6] The Atwood line is full of knights and ladies and has been traced back to Wolverly, Worcestershire in the year 1310. Many branches of this ancestry can be traced to the Normans in the 1000s.

Back to the two brothers…

On September 19, 1796, President George Washington published his farewell address. Ten days later Hezekiah Atwood II died at the age of 31, leaving his wife Sarah Lydia Heath with four children under nine years old including Solomon and Hezekiah. Little is known of this family for the next 13 years, although they would have experienced important parts of American history including the presidencies of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, and the exploration of the Lewis and Clark Expedition the following year. Shortly after his 23rd birthday Solomon Atwood married Betsy Strong just over the border in Canaan, New York, on February 7, 1808. They remained in Berkshire County, Massachusetts until after their first child was born and died in 1809. By then, Hezekiah was 22 and the two brothers were ready to set out on their own. Their 17 year old brother Phineas and 15 year old sister Lydia remained for a time with their widowed mother. Phineas was still living in Hop Creek when his last child was born in 1835, but by 1850 he had moved west to Illinois. Lydia married a young man named James Clarke from Lorraine, New York on the east end of Lake Ontario and spent the rest of her life there. Neither of the siblings accompanied their older brothers to Bloomfield, Ontario, County, New York, and their mother Sarah Lydia never left Massachusetts.

Bloomfield was located on the stage route from Albany to Buffalo, and its first white settlers arrived after the Revolutionary War ended, when George Washington sent troops to evict the Seneca Indians, who had been allies of Britain. In 1812 the township of Victor, where the Atwood brothers settled, was created out of the northern portion of Bloomfield Township and contained a large number of settlers from Berkshire County. Solomon's wife Betsy Strong was from West Stockbridge, a neighboring town to Hop Brook.

Hezekiah enlisted in the army as a fife musician.[7] Fifers were traditionally non-combatant infantry men who, along with drummers, were used during combat and in training to direct the men into formation. Fifers were essential because the high pitch of the instrument could be heard over the din of battle, farther than a commander could shout orders. They were also used in camp to regulate activities such as meals, bedtime, drills, and marching. Traditionally there were two fifers and two drummers in each regiment of 100 combatants. Interestingly, both of Hezekiah's brothers, Solomon and Phineas, enlisted in the war as drummers the following year.[8]

The upper fife is a Metzler British fife. The lower is an Eisenbrant fife used by the Americans.

[6] This was the largest conflict of the war. It effectively removed the Royalists from northern England and access to the continent through the ports on the North Sea Coast. *Genealogical and Family History of the State of Connecticut*, William Richard Cutter Editor, Vol I, 1911, page 58.

[7] The source of the pipe photo is https://historyoftheancients.wordpress.com/2012/09/04/1128/.

[8] Their father's service in the Revolutionary War was not as a musician. He served in guard and camp service in the Hudson Highlands of New York.

Hezekiah was soon promoted to the position of Fife Major. Since fifers and drummers were often boys who were still too young to fight, and in light of his age of 25 and the rapidity of his advancement, it seems likely that he had prior experience as a military musician, probably in the Massachusetts militia before he moved to New York, and possibly alongside his older brother, Solomon. Immediately after his enlistment in the U.S. Army, Hezekiah was assigned at Five Mile Meadows on the Niagara River at Niagara Falls and also at Fort Niagara (also known as Fort George), all of which were facilities north of Buffalo on the American side of the Niagara River that were used to prepare for the Battle of Queenston on the British side of the river, in which Hezekiah was involved on October 13, just two and a half months after his enlistment.

Queenston by John David
courtesy of Library and Archives, Canada

Two months earlier, the United States had suffered an embarrassing defeat at Fort Detroit by the British and their Shawnee allies under Tecumseh, and the Americans were looking for a quick reversal. The British were expecting an attack from Fort Niagara at the mouth of the river on Lake Ontario, so the American field commander, Stephen Van Rensselaer led a daring surprise invasion at Queenston. The regular army including Hezekiah crossed the river to attack the town, but the British won the battle with the aid of Native Americans and a "Coloured Regiment" of black soldiers. Almost 1,000 of the Americans were taken prisoner and 300 were killed or wounded. The victors lost only 28 killed and 77 wounded, but one of the dead was Major General Isaac Brock, who with Tecumseh had headed the British victory at Ft. Detroit. Hezekiah was among the wounded Americans. Later he wrote, "I was at the Battle of Queenston and was wounded in three places in storming a breastwork on Queenston Heights…. I received one wound on the right side of my head, one on my right hand, and one in my right leg."

At that time, it was contrary to the rules of war to attack a fifer, which makes me think that Hezekiah was attacked by one of the Native Americans, who were not bound by such rules. He later testified that he was acting during the battle as "such officer," which I take to mean Fife Major. Hezekiah may have had no memory of the actual blows, since such a blow to the head often causes amnesia for the event and would have rendered him unconscious. His injury produced epileptic seizures for the rest of his life and in his words, "decreased my judgment." The injury to his right hand was probably incurred while trying to ward off the blow to his head, and his right leg was penetrated, probably fracturing the tibia.[9]

[9] In evaluating Hezekiah's disability from those injuries physician James Prentice wrote on June 21, 1850: "…he has an injury upon the right side of his head, which has the appearance of being inflicted by a sword or cutlass producing a cicatrix (scar) two inches and a half in length extending from the coronal suture to the right frontal protuberance of the frontal bone fracturing the skull and depressing a small portion of the Os Frontis, which I believe to be a serious injury to him, rendering him subject to epileptic fits and incapacitating him for hard labour, and that he has cicatrices on his right hand and also one cicatrix on his right leg which has the appearance of being the result of a wound from a full on bayonet which I think may have injured one of the bones of the leg, which I

After the battle Hezekiah was taken prisoner by the British but later escaped and made his way to Flint Hill, four miles east of Buffalo, a winter quarters for troops located on a rocky plateau. Typical of Buffalo in winter, the weather was harsh. According to letters from soldiers arriving at camp, there was a shortage of blankets, coats, socks, and boots, and many had only summer linen uniforms. Food was scarce, and when it did arrive, it was often spoiled.[10] Surgeons who attended the injured and sick complained of the lack of medicine and instruments. An American prisoner of the British wrote that in the camp of about 3,000 regular troops, eight or nine were dying daily from disease as bad as a plague. William Hodge, proprietor of a nearby tavern, was pressed into service to make 300 coffins during the winter of 1812-1813. After escaping death in battle, Hezekiah escaped death a second time in while he was in recovery.

Hezekiah did not write how long he stayed at Flint Hill, but by the end of spring he was home, although still enlisted in the army. On June 23, 1813, he married 22 year old Chloe Ann Rowley in Mendon, Monroe County, New York, a town located just five miles west of Victor where Solomon was living. On July 28, 1813, Hezekiah was discharged at Fort George for disability as the result of the wounds he had received at Queenston Heights, and he and Chloe made a home in Mendon.

They must have known each other before Hezekiah enlisted unless they became acquainted during his convalescence. Possibly they first met in Massachusetts. Although they were seven years apart in age, Chloe must have known Solomon's wife, Betsy, since they were both from West Stockbridge. Chloe was the first of 11 children of Hiel and Susannah Rowley. Her father had died March 1807 in Berkshire when Chloe was 15, leaving her five-months-pregnant widowed mother Susannah with at least[11] seven children ages two to 15. By some reports, Susannah died in 1808, which would have left Chloe in charge of her younger orphaned siblings. With or without her mother, Chloe and probably most of her siblings had moved to East Bloomfield by the time Chloe married Hezekiah in 1813.[12]

In November of 1813 Hezekiah's brother Solomon signed up for military duty in Victor as a drummer and served about three months, after which he received a land warrant for 160 acres. On August 24, 1814, the British burned the White House and Capitol in Washington, D.C. causing President Madison and his cabinet to flee to Maryland. Two weeks later Hezekiah's brother Phineas enlisted as a drummer in the Massachusetts militia, serving only six weeks. He married that December.

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believe to be an injury to him producing at times swelling of the limb and rheumatism." Sworn before Thomas Raynor, JP.

[10] https://www.buffaloah.com/h/flint/index.html

[11] I don't have a death date for two of them.

[12] The Rowley children were Simeon, 21, Prudence, 19, Alpheus, 18, Robert, 17, Deborah, 15, Orson, 13, Benjamin, 11, Emeline, three, and Susan, one. I have not been able to find a marriage or death date for Prudence, so I don't know where she ended up, but Chloe's brother Simeon and most of the children were probably living in East Bloomfield, where Simeon Rowley married a local girl in 1815 and lived there until he died in 1884. By then Alpheus had gone to Ohio and signed up for the militia. Robert's location at the time is unknown, but by 1823 he had married a girl in Niagara, Canada, so he was possibly living somewhere near to Chloe. All of the younger children--Debora, Orson, Emeline, and Susan—also ended up in small towns in the general area of Rochester except Benjamin who joined the Navy at age 14 by lying about his age, and he eventually died at sea.

Chapter 2 -- Simeon Atwood's Childhood.

On September 12, 1814, Simeon Atwood was born to Hezekiah and Chloe in Mendon, Monroe, New York.

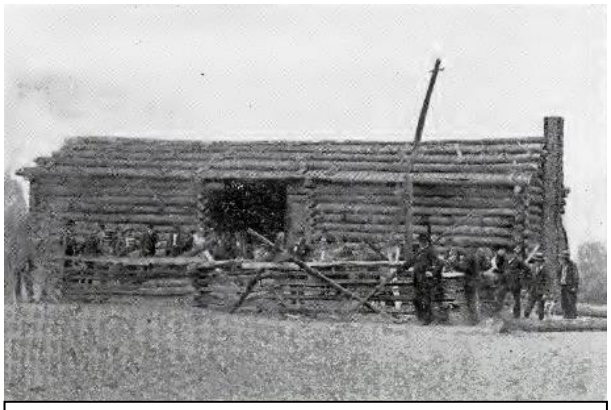
The area of Mendon was originally a settlement of 4,000 Seneca Indians known as Totiakton, which was destroyed by the French in 1687. In 1779 George Washington sent the Sullivan-Clinton Expedition to break the Seneca Indians' hold on the Niagara frontier. When peace came, the surrounding land in the Finger Lakes and Genesee River areas was opened for sale, and there was a land rush beginning around 1788 with the arrival of Massachusetts land developers. Most of the early settlers came from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont. The first 26 families came before 1800 and did not include the families of interest to us: the Youngs, Kimballs, or the Atwoods. When a road was extended westward, Mendon was on the route to Buffalo and Lake Erie. Many mills sprang up and the first hotel was built in 1812. The town of Mendon was organized in 1813, just in time for the Atwoods. But they did not live there for long.

Before the American Revolution, all of the western part of New York was considered part of Massachusetts. By the same token, northern Ohio along Lake Erie from the eastern border with Pennsylvania to Sandusky Bay was originally called the Connecticut Western Reserve or New Connecticut, based on Connecticut's royal charter by King Charles II in 1662 extending its area from "sea-to-sea." This eventually led to a conflict between Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, which was resolved in 1782 under the Articles of Confederation, but Connecticut was able to reserve a 120-mile strip of what is now Ohio west of Pennsylvania in compensation, while all of Ohio to the south and west became part of the Northwest Territory, which was gained from England when America achieved independence, and included Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Native American title to the land east of the Cuyahoga River, which runs through Cleveland, was revoked by the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, making the Reserve available for sale and settlement. The State of Connecticut sold that land to the Connecticut Land Company for $1.2 million to support the Connecticut School Fund. The original settler in the reserve was Moses Cleaveland (sic) in 1796 after whom Cleveland, Ohio was named. Connecticut finally surrendered all governing authority over the Reserve to the U.S. Government through the "Quieting Act" in 1800, and in 1809 the Connecticut Land Company went out of business. There followed a rush to settle northern Ohio.

One of the early land purchasers was a man named John Stoughton Strong. In February 1816 with four men, one woman, and a child, Strong came about 15 miles from Cleveland to the mouth of Rocky River and a few miles inland to clear out an acre of his land and build two log cabins. Shortly afterward, they hired a surveyor and laid out 100 lots of 160 acres each. 1816 was the infamous "year without a summer" due to the eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia (Dutch East Indies in those days), the world's largest volcanic eruption in at least 1,300 years. A persistent dry fog was observed in parts of the eastern United States, which reddened and dimmed the sunlight, making sunspots visible with the naked eye. Frosts occurring nearly every day in May 1816 killed most crops in upstate New York and snow fell on June 6. Another frost covered much of the northeast on August 23. Lake and river ice was observed in July and August in northwestern Pennsylvania. The crops that survived were sold at high

prices, causing additional hardship. Crop failures that year promoted massive abandonment of New England and increased migration to western New York and further. That was the year in which Joseph Smith's family moved to Palmyra, New York, driven out of Vermont because of the failure of their farm.

During the fall several families joined Strong's party, and the first white child was born in the township to the Chipman Porter family.[13] Although it did not make the history books, Hezekiah Atwood Jr. was likely the second child born in Strongsville that fall,[14] for that is when Hezekiah Atwood arrived with two year old Simeon and Chloe, who was pregnant with their second son. Hardly any crops had survived the summer months in the Strongsville settlement and there was much hardship the following winter. It was not until January 25, 1818, that the township of Strongsville was organized. That spring John Strong finally brought his own family to live there.



A typical Strongsville cabin of that period

Hezekiah did not personally own one of the 160 acre lots. Although he must have received some military pay, he apparently never received a land bounty[15] for his military service. It seems more likely that he worked for one of the landowners at first, but property tax records beginning in 1820 show that by then Hezekiah owned 48 acres on lot four, which was probably on the edge of the settlement. Since the lots contained 160 acres, it appears that Hezekiah shared the lot with one or two other families.

Simeon's sister Lydia was born September 29, 1818, in Henrietta, Monroe County, New York, 10 miles northwest of Mendon, so it appears that Chloe returned to where she could expect a safer and more comfortable delivery for her third child. She stayed with her brother Simeon Rowley and his wife Lucy, who had recently moved to Henrietta from Bloomfield. By the time of the 1820 census, Chloe had apparently returned to Strongsville, but without Lydia, whom she had left with the Rowleys. Now there were 65 households in Strongsville, but still only one framed residence—just cabins and dugouts. One of the families there was headed by John Coltrin with 11 children including his 16 year old son Zebedee, who would later become a prominent Mormon.[16] The 1820 census shows a "Hez" Atwood of the appropriate age living in Strongsville, Cuyahoga, Ohio, but in addition to two sons corresponding to

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[13] Credit for cabin photo: *History of Strongsville, Cuyahoga County, Ohio*, Berea, Ohio, 1901.

[14] On October 12, 1876, Simeon Atwood performed proxy baptisms for his brother, Hezekiah Jr., his father, Hezekiah Sr., and his deceased son, Stephen. Hezekiah Jr.'s birthplace was given as Strongsville, Ohio. He was born in 1816, so the Atwoods must have been among the settlers that fall. Microfilm 0,183,388 Family History Library.

[15] Hezekiah spent years applying for his pension and land bounty. The pension was eventually awarded, but there is no record in the U.S. General Land Office that land was awarded to Simeon. https://glorecords.blm.gov/default.aspx

[16] Zebedee Coltrin was baptized in 1831 by the missionary Solomon Hancock. Coltrin met Joseph Smith and joined him to Kirtland, where he eventually became the stake president after performing a great deal of missionary work. Zebedee died in Spanish Fork, Utah in 1887 having lived there at the same time as Simeon.

Simeon and Hezekiah's ages (<10), there are also two boys between 10 and 15 and female under 26. I don't know who the two teenage boys were--perhaps Hezekiah was boarding farm workers. I think that the female was Chloe even though the listed age group was too young. She would have been pregnant with Alpheus, who was born in Strongsville later that year. Their daughter Lydia was two years old and did not appear in this census. She was probably one of the two girls under five in Simeon Rowley's family, still in Henrietta, New York.[17]

In the spring of 1820 Joseph Smith received his famous vision in the sacred grove in Fayette Township, New York. That was also the first year of Strongsville's annual property tax records which showed Hezekiah Atwood's land in Strongsville. The tax record for the following year showed that a man named Timothy Eggleston also owned 48 acres on lot 4,[18] so the Atwoods had a close neighbor. The tax records for the next two years are missing. In 1823 Hezekiah's tax was shown as paid, but in 1824 the tax was double the amount in comparison to others with the same acreage and there was a notation "1821.22" in the "comments" column, suggesting that Hezekiah had made up a delinquent payment. Hezekiah was designated as a resident on that tax notice, so they were still living in Strongsville. The tax record for 1825 is missing.

On October 5, 1825, the much-anticipated Erie Canal was completed from the Hudson River in Albany to Rochester, making it possible to travel cheaply and easily by water and introducing a new rush of immigrants to Ohio and Michigan. That is probably the year in which Atwoods left Ohio and returned to Mendon, where their son Charles was born in 1826.[19]

But Mendon was no longer the town that Atwoods had left a decade earlier.

In 1822 Heber C. Kimball and his brother Charles moved to Mendon from West Bloomfield,[20] where his family had located in February 1811 when Heber was nine years old. The population of Mendon in 1820 was 2,012 and in 1830 it was 3,057, a 50% increase. Their father was a blacksmith there during the war with the British in 1812, and at around the age of 14 Heber began an apprenticeship under him. But when the war ended and the demand for blacksmiths stopped, his father's business failed. Heber wrote, "When 19 years of age my father having lost his property…I was left to seek a place of refuge or house of my own…many times went two or three days without food to eat, being bashful and daring not to ask for it."[21] His older brother Charles Kimball, who lived in a nearby town, heard of the problem and "offered to learn me the Potter's trade." Heber agreed and continued with Charles until he was 21. That is when they moved together to Mendon, where Heber worked six months for wages. In

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[17] Simeon Rowley's boy, John, was not born until December 12 that year, so he missed the census. Apparently Simeon and Lucy had a girl of their own who died young, since no girl that age appears in their pedigrees. They had been married five years.

[18] Eggleston arrived from Croydon, New Hampshire in 1821. He married Lura Wheeling in Strongsville on February 3, 1822, and eventually had eight children.

[19] Hezekiah probably leased out his property in Ohio rather than immediately selling it when he returned to New York, for he continued to get tax notices through 1836. Most of these were marked delinquent and many were carried over to the next year, suggesting that Hezekiah's lessee was not paying rent. In 1831 Hezekiah's tax was paid by Eggleston, possibly to forestall foreclosure.

[20] It is possible that they were already acquainted there with Hezekiah and Solomon before Hezekiah's marriage in 1813.

[21] Church History Library, Heber C. Kimball Papers, 1837-1866, MS 627, Autobiography, circa 1842-1866,.

November 1823, Heber married Vilate Murry and immediately afterward purchased his brother Charles' business and went into the potter's trade for himself.

Some of the biographies of Simeon Atwood and also his obituary claim that he had worked as an apprentice to Heber C. Kimball in the potter's trade, but this relationship was not mentioned in Kimball's autobiography, nor did Kimball, who had been a potter's apprentice himself, ever record having employed one as far as I can determine. But when the Atwoods returned to Mendon in 1826, Simeon was about 12 years old, the right age to have begun an apprenticeship.

Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, married Emma Hale against the wishes of her parents in 1827, and on September 22 received the golden plates from the angel Moroni. In 1828 Martin Harris became the scribe for Joseph Smith as he translated the plates until the infamous 116 pages of the translation were lost. But apparently neither Simeon Atwood nor Heber C. Kimball were yet aware of these events despite the fact that Mendon is only about 17 miles from Manchester, where the Smiths lived.

Brigham Young, future LDS prophet, moved to Mendon in late 1828, where he built a home and carpentry shop on his father's property. Simeon would have been 14 at that time. Brigham had lived with one of his sisters in Auburn, N.Y. where he apprenticed as a carpenter, painter, and glazier, making furniture and mantelpieces. He married Miriam Works in 1824 and they had a child before moving to Mendon. After their daughter Vilate was born, Miriam became an invalid due to consumption,[22] and Brigham did much of the housework. He became a good friend of Heber C. Kimball, and there was some intermarriage among their families. Young's brother Phineas bought a Book of Mormon from Samuel Smith in 1830. The book had been first published March 26 of that year. The Church of Christ (later known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) was organized by Joseph Smith on April 6.

By the time of the 1830 census, Hezekiah Atwood had moved back to Victor, about seven miles east of Mendon. The census showed that he had two boys aged 5-10 and one aged 10-15. The two younger boys would have been Charles and Alpheus. Simeon and Hezekiah were 15 and 14 so one of them was not living in the household. In "Eber" C. Kimball's residence in Mendon the census showed a male age 15-20. Heber's children were a boy and a girl under five. The teenager was likely an apprentice and could have been Simeon Atwood.

Heber C. Kimball joined the Baptist Church in 1831, and just three weeks later he met a Mormon missionary. To further investigate the Church, Heber and Brigham drove a sleigh 130 miles in January 1832 to Bradford County, Pennsylvania to the home of Alpheus Gifford, the missionary who had taught them, where they stayed six days. Elder Gifford returned to Mendon in April and baptized Brigham Young in his own mill race along with his family including his young wife Miriam.[23] Heber C. Kimball was baptized in Brigham's mill race the following day. Besides Brigham and Heber there were about 30 Mormons in Mendon in 1832, many of them in the Young and Kimball families. None of them were Atwoods, but if Simeon was working for Heber C. Kimball during this time, he must have heard a lot about Mormonism, and he would have known Brigham Young.

[22] Tuberculosis.
[23] Miriam Young died September 8, 1832.

Kimball wrote that he sold most of his things or sent them by boat and moved to Kirtland, Ohio with Brigham Young, Brigham's two daughters, and Joseph Young by wagon in the fall of 1833, arriving late October or early November. Simeon found himself without a job if he had been working for Kimball.

Simeon was said in his obituary "to have plowed around the elevation of the Hill Cumorah many a time," but this seems less likely than his apprenticeship, though possible. It is 14 miles as the crow flies, 18 miles by road, from Mendon to the Hill Cumorah and 12 miles from Victor, where Simeon's parents lived. Even Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball didn't visit Cumorah or Palmyra until long after their conversion to Mormonism. Since Heber left for Kirtland during the winter, the first chance to plow would have been in the spring of 1834. By that fall Simeon was married and living in Pomfret, New York, 140 miles away. Did Simeon travel alone or did his parents and siblings come with him?

At the end of October 1833 when Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball left for Kirtland, Simeon was 19 years old. Hezekiah Jr., if still living,[24] would have turned 17 sometime that fall, and Lydia was turning 15. Alpheus was 13 and Charles was seven.

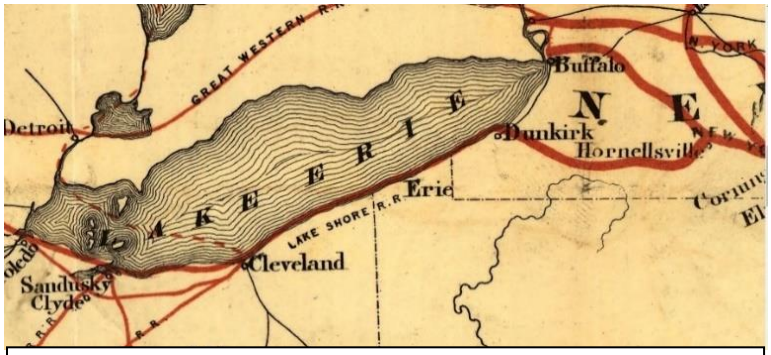
Interestingly, Simeon's sister Lydia's first child, Sylvester, was born in Dunkirk September 22, 1836, seven miles from Pomfret. She had married Heman Rew a year earlier somewhere in New York, possibly in Dunkirk, which suggests that the whole family may have accompanied Simeon in 1833-34, since Lydia was only 15 years old and unmarried at that time.

During the next 12 months Simeon made his way 140 miles down the shore of Lake Erie with or without his parents and family to Chautauqua County, New York.

[24] There is no record of Hezekiah Jr. after the 1830 census. Because he was baptized a member of the LDS church by proxy October 12, 1876, we can assume that he at least reached the age of eight in 1824. He is not the Hezekiah Smith Atwood who married Abby Ann Tuttle, who incorrectly appears in some family pedigrees. See the discussion note in *FamilySearch* LZP3-F48.

Chapter 3 – Chautauqua and Crawford Counties

Ever since the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, all of western New York was flourishing, including Chautauqua County. In 1831 lumbering was the dominant industry, wood being shipped east and south by flatboat across the Chautauqua Lake and down the Allegany River to Pittsburg and the Ohio River. In 1832 the New York and Erie Railroad Company were incorporated, making the county accessible both by land and by Lake Erie.



Early Railroad Map

Simeon Atwood and Melissa Ann Turrell were married in Pomfret, Chautauqua, New York on September 30, 1834.[25] Pomfret is near the town of Dunkirk on the shore of Lake Erie. According to one family biography,[26] that is where they first met. Simeon was described as 5'7" with blue eyes, brown hair, fair skin, and a very happy, cheerful personality.[27] He was by then 20 and Melissa was only 15 years old but was probably glad to be out on her own, having recently arrived from Hinesburg, Vermont with her parents and seven half-siblings all under 13 years old. Her father with the pretentious name of Doctor Cogsdale Turrell was not a physician at all, but an illiterate 43 year old farmer. Doctor was simply his first name.[28] Hannah Remington, his third wife, became a stepmother to Melissa around her first birthday. Melissa's birth mother Abigail had died in 1819, probably while giving birth to Melissa, her first child, so Hannah was the only mother Melissa had known. Doctor had married his first wife, Christiana, in New Milford, Connecticut before they moved to Vermont around 1811, where she died around 1818.[29] When the Turrells and Simeon Atwood arrived, Chautauqua County was booming with a population of about 4,000. It was on the highway along the Erie shore to Kirtland, and Dunkirk was an important port with a railroad connection clear to New York City.

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[25]Dunkirk is the site of a lighthouse on Lake Erie built in 1826, seven miles north of Pomfret, and it was the westernmost town in New York State. It became an important place joining the railroad with sea traffic.

[26] Heath and Melissa Parker, *Beautiful upon the Mountains*, Family Heritage Publishers, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2010.

[27] *Family Files of Carol Van Mondfrans*—written by Lula Atwood, Doctor's daughter. KWJW-QSP Memories, *FamilySearch.*

[28] Doctor signed his will with an "x." Two of his uncles were named Doctor and Major, and the name Doctor was passed down to at least two of his descendants. Cogsdale was the surname of his mother.

[29] The Turrells (also known as the Terrells) had lived in Connecticut since the 1640s when Doctor's 3rd great grandfather Roger Terrell immigrated from England with a group of merchants to establish the town of Milford on the coast near New Haven. Doctor's grandfather, Caleb Terrell, moved 36 miles up the Housatonic River to establish New Milford around 1740. Just before the American Revolution a group of investors from New Milford chartered newly opened land in what is now northern Vermont between Lake Champlain and the Green Mountains. One of the new landowners there was Ethan Allen, the famed leader of the Green Mountain Boys who fought at Ticonderoga. When the war was over, Doctor and his father Caleb Terrell were among a large group of families from New Milford to move into Hinesburg.

FamilySearch and most *Ancestry* pedigrees state without a source that Simeon's mother, Chloe Ann Rowley, died November 28, 1834, in Hop Brook, Berkshire, Massachusetts, about the time that Simeon was married in Pomfret. That location for her death seems unlikely to me. Why would she have returned to Hop Brook? Both of her parents were dead, and her siblings had moved out of the state.[30] I think the date of her death is probably wrong as well. The 1840 census shows Hezekiah living in Burlington, Michigan with a female born between 1781 and 1790 and a boy born between 1820 and 1830 who is almost certainly her son, Alpheus, who married Louisa Hall two years later on December 21, 1842 in the same town. This suggests strongly that Chloe accompanied Hezekiah to Michigan[31] and died sometime between 1840 and 1848, when Hezekiah remarried. More on that later. It seems likely that Hezekiah went to Calhoun County during the period of its heavy settlement around 1834 with his son Alpheus and (if I'm correct about her death,) Chloe. They would have started their trip on the Erie Canal to Buffalo and then gone by steamboat to either Toledo or Detroit, which are about the same distance from Calhoun County, and then taken primitive roads by wagon drawn by oxen about 120 miles, taking 7-10 days.

It is possible that Simeon had a chance to renew his relationship to Brigham Young during this period. In May 1835, Brigham Young was sent with Elders Amos Orton and John P. Greene by Joseph Smith from Kirtland on a mission to the Native Americans residing in the northeastern states. One of Brigham's first stops was at Dunkirk, where he stayed a few days preaching.[32] He visited a 55 year old relative named Julius Morton[33] to preach the gospel to him but wrote that Julius was unreceptive.

In February 1837 Simeon and Melissa had their first child, Alonzo Turrell Atwood, in Pomfret, which contained about 300 people when it was incorporated that May. The same spring a man named David Dodge died in Dunkirk, leaving his wife Maria Cole with five children under 14. Before the end of the year, Maria Cole married Melissa's recently widowed father, Doctor Turrell, increasing their mixed family to 10 children under 14.[34] Maria had been born in Dunkirk in 1799 and raised in Chautauqua County, which would have helped to give Simeon and Melissa a good foothold in the area.

The census of 1840 showed that the rapid growth in Chautauqua County was slowing, mainly due to outmigration to the west. One of the families who had left Chautauqua County was Simeon's sister Lydia and her husband Heman Rew, but it wasn't to the west. They had returned to Rochester around 1838 where they had two more children, Abbie and Heman Jr.

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[30] I have searched the Massachusetts death records without finding Chloe. Church death records are quite extensive in Massachusetts for that period. Unfortunately, I have not been able to document her death anywhere or any time.

[31] Calhoun County, Michigan, was first settled by a man named Justus Goodwin, who bought 600 acres and built a mill on the St. Joseph River in 1832 near the eastern border of the county. The first log cabin built in Burlington Township was by Joseph Sanders in 1834, but the rush of settlers began in 1834. Of the 460,800 acres of land in the county, only 44,000 remained unsold by July 1, 1837. Burlington village was not platted until 1842, so the township was dotted with isolated farms cleared from the timber. The area was fairly level with some isolated small plains and good soil with few rocky areas. It contained many streams, and the St. Joseph River ran through it, providing power for mills. (G. Gardner, *History of Calhoun County, Michigan*, Vol I, Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago and New York, 1913.)

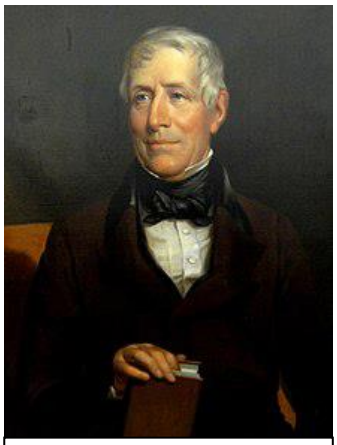
[32] Brigham Young autobiography at https://josephsmithfoundation.org/brigham-young-1801-1877/.

[33] *FamilySearch* GNB3-K5Q. Julius Morton was in the 1840 census in Pomfret, but not in 1830.

[34] Maria's daughter Celia married Doctor's son Nicholas in 1842.

Another family who left the county was Simeon and Melissa's. I don't know what type of work Simeon had been doing in Pomfret--perhaps his job disappeared in the local recession, but shortly after their second child William's birth, Simeon got a new job that took him out of New York and into Rome Township in Crawford County, Pennsylvania[35] about 72 miles south of Dunkirk. Sometime in the next three years Simeon's sister Lydia left Heman and followed Simeon to Rome Township with her children.

Simeon became an agent for Harm Jan Huidekoper[36] a large landowner in Pennsylvania and an immigrant from Holland. The Holland Land Company had hired the dutchman to be their land agent for a term of 40 years in Meadville.[37] He became a noted citizen and philanthropist in Pennsylvania and his son Alfred was a writer and poet in his later years.



Harm Jan Huidekoper

The 1840 U.S. Census for Rome Township, Crawford, Pennsylvania showed Simeon Atwood with two boys under five, Alonzo and William, one male under 30 (himself), and one woman under 30, (Melissa). There were 155 families and 647 people in the township. Simeon and Melissa's third child, Walter Henry Turrell Atwood, was born in Rome on January 25, 1841, and Charles Barber Atwood on December 14, 1843.

Apparently working for a land agent was not lucrative—the young Atwood family was very poor. An interesting story[38] tells of Simeon carrying a two bushel sack of rye on his back three miles to the mill, then grinding it himself in the night, and arriving home at three a.m. to feed his starving family. Evidently he did not begin to make bricks until he moved to Erie County around nine years later.

Simeon's sister Lydia Atwood Rew married Daniel Bennett in Rome sometime in 1844. Her son Sylvester was eight. Heman was five, and Abbie was six. Bennett's wife had died November 3, 1843, leaving him with about nine children, the youngest of whom was three. Daniel's oldest child was just seven years younger than Lydia. Bennett, like Lydia's father, Hezekiah, was a veteran of the Battle of Queenston, though in a different regiment.

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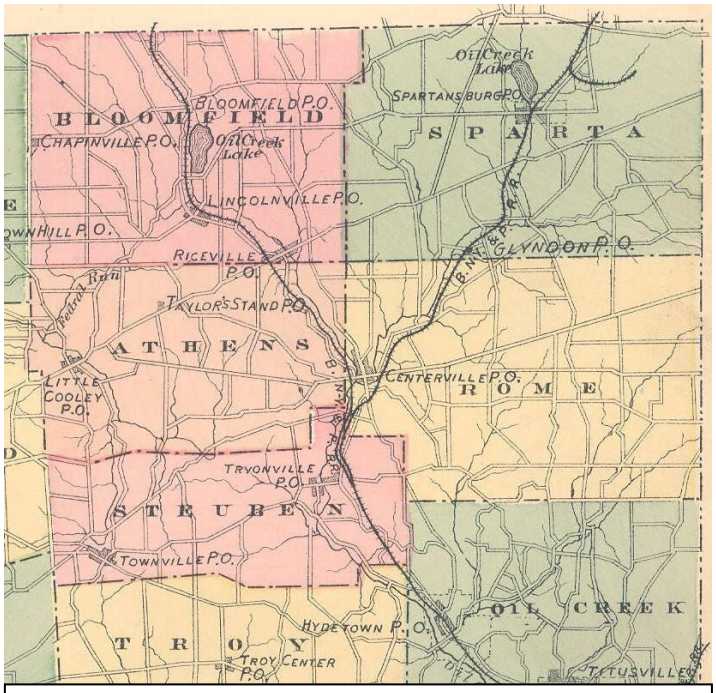
[35] From *History of Crawford County* beginning page 613: Rome township population was 652 in 1840 and 940 in 1850. It is drained by Oil Creek. Much of the northern and western part is pine. The Holland Land Company owned most of the land in the southern part. Eight of the 30 tracts of 430 acres were sold between 1799 and 1815. There were 75 names on the tax roll in 1830. The Borough of Centerville was created in 1865. The township was just scattered homesteads before that. There was a Presbyterian, Methodist and a Congregational Church congregation during Simeon's time there. The first Baptist Church was established in 1862.

[36] He is identified in various family accounts as Mr. Hidecooper or Hidercooper. See *FamilySearch* KCR7-XHX.

[37] The land company had obtained 1,400,000 acres in northwest Pennsylvania in the French Creek Valley through the 1792 Land Act, which paid off Revolutionary War debts to the Dutch firm in western Indian lands. Huidekoper began with 22,000 acres from the Holland Company in June 1804. In 1839, Huidekoper bought out Holland's holdings in Crawford County, Erie County, and several others including Berkshire County, Massachusetts for $178,000.

[38] From the book: *The History of Murray City, Utah* as quoted in Simeon's memories in *FamilySearch*.

It was at about this time that Simeon and Melissa became Mormons.



Rome and the townships that surround it in Crawford County. The Atwood family probably lived near Centerville.

Chapter 4 -- Simeon Becomes a Mormon

In 1844 a young missionary named Stephen Post was living and working in Crawford County. He was born in 1810 in Greenwich, New York near the Vermont border, but moved as a child to Sparta Township[39] in Crawford County, Pennsylvania, where he married in 1833. There he was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Stephen Winchester on July 14, 1835, whereupon he left his wife and children and moved to Kirtland where he taught school, was ordained an elder, soon afterward a seventy, and attended the dedication of the Kirtland Temple before returning to his family in 1836. Later that year Post served a mission in Pennsylvania and New York for about seven months. In 1839 he served another mission in Michigan. After his return in 1840, which is about when the Atwood family arrived in Crawford County, Stephen worked his trade as a blacksmith on weekdays, but on weekends he preached in the surrounding townships. Sometime before 1843 he moved his family to Rome Township.

In October of 1843 Post left his family again to visit Nauvoo, where he lived several months in nearby La Harpe, Illinois, teaching school among the Nauvoo saints who had moved from Michigan. In April 1844 he was among the large group of missionaries called to promote Joseph Smith's campaign for President of the United States—he was assigned to Pennsylvania. Preaching along the way, Elder Post arrived in Rome Township on July 7, where he first heard rumors of the "Mormon War" and the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith on June 27 in Carthage jail. Most of the campaign missionaries returned to Nauvoo upon learning of the tragedy, but Stephen Post remained home and resumed his preaching in Rome and Sparta townships. Significantly, as we shall soon discover, he was not in Nauvoo to witness the subsequent debate over the succession of leadership of the Church between Brigham Young, Sidney Rigdon, and Joseph Strang (and others).

Sidney Rigdon
Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society

On August 3, 1844, Sidney Rigdon, having arrived from Pittsburgh where he was the stake president, announced in Nauvoo that he had received a revelation appointing him Guardian of the Church. On August 8th Brigham opposed Rigdon's motion and asserted a claim for the primacy of the Quorum of the Twelve. Rigdon was excommunicated September 8, 1844, and he returned to Pittsburg to organize the Church of Jesus Christ of the Children of Zion on April 6, 1845, better known as the Rigdonites.[40]

One week later, Stephen Post recorded in his diary[41] the following entries that involved the Atwoods:

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[39] Sparta is the township adjacent to Rome on the north.

[40] Rigdon's church fell apart in 1847 but was reorganized by William Bickerton in 1862 under the name The Church of Jesus Christ. In 1863 Stephen Post and Rigdon exchanged letters which led to the appointment of Stephen Post as one of the five leaders of the new church in Philadelphia. Rigdon sent him on a mission "from Pittsburg to the Great Lakes and as far west as the people are scattered except Utah." He was to send all converts west of the Mississippi to Iowa or to Sabeasha (sic) for their deliverance in the day of trouble.

[41] Church History Library, *Stephen Post Papers, 1835-1921* / Second Acquisition, 1835-1884 / Journals, 1835-1879 / 1839 July-1848 December, MS 1304.

April 13, 1845: I preached at Simeon Atwood's, Rome Township.

June 1: I preached at Centreville and baptized Simeon and Malissa (sic) his wife, confirming them at the water's edge. May the Lord be very gracious to them and help them to fulfil their covenants.

June 8: I preached at Simeon Atwood's.

October 5: Attended at Br. Atwoods. No hearers and did not preach. Rainy.

November 5: I received a letter from Margaret McDougall, Nauvoo, together with a circular and almanac. The circular declares the intention of the Brethren to move to Oregon in the Spring.

November 11: I preached at Concord this day we had appointed as a fast day. And spent the PM in meeting Br. Atwood and his wife from near Centreville…. I laid before the brethren the circular of the Twelve containing the resolutions to move next spring.

I have wondered why the Atwood family remained in Pennsylvania when the Saints were forced to exit Nauvoo in the winter of 1846, and later in 1847 when they headed for the Great Salt Lake Valley. Possibly it was their plan to go west at this point. They certainly knew about the exodus, judging from the foregoing diary entry by their church leader. However, perhaps Elder Post was not supportive of the move.

Post received a letter[42] from Edson Barney, the president of the Second Quorum of Seventies in Nauvoo on December 17, 1845, ordering him to "report in person or by letter to the Quorum and let us know how your feelings are or your name will be dropped from the Quorum." The Saints were at that very time feverishly preparing to depart Nauvoo. I think that the Seventies must have suspected that Elder Post sympathized with Sydney Rigdon. Perhaps Post had publicly expressed misgivings which affected his flock in Crawford County.

Seven months later, Post entered the following in his journal:

July 19, 1846: I preached in the East of Rome. I received today four months of the *Voree Herald*.[43] I read them after I returned before I slept, and the result is that I find much good evidence that James J. Strang is appointed by the Will of God to preside over his Church as successor to Joseph Smith.

Elder Post remained in Rome and so did the Atwoods. Chloe Ann Atwood, their first daughter and named for her grandmother, was born on December 12, 1846. By this time the Nauvoo Saints had been expelled from The City Beautiful and were wintering at Council Bluffs, Winter Quarters, scattered across Iowa, or down the Missouri River.

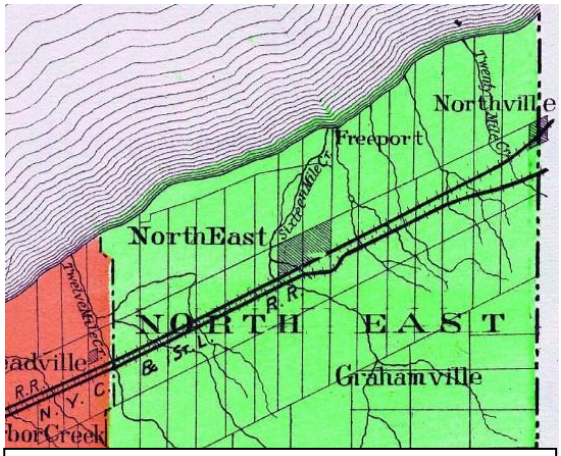
[42] Stephen Post letters, Church History Library MS 1304.
[43] The *Voree Herald* was the publication of the Strangites. https://archive.org/details/VoreeHerald1846

When Simeon and Melissa's son Stephen Turrell Atwood was born in Rome on January 9, 1848, the vanguard group of saints were wintering in the Salt Lake Valley and Brigham Young had returned to Winter Quarters to begin the great migration of 1848.

Meanwhile in the frontier settlement of Burlington, Michigan, Simeon's brother Alpheus had married Louisa Hall in December 1842 and begun producing their four children. They never left Michigan. If I am right about Simeon's mother Chloe accompanying Hezekiah to Michigan, she died there sometime before 1848 when the widowed Hezekiah left their son Alpheus and joined Simeon and Lydia in Rome. On April 28 Hezekiah married Eliza Tryon Perkins, age 47, in Athens Township nine miles west of Rome at the house of Benjamin Clark.[44]

Eliza was a widow from Winchester, Litchfield, Connecticut, who had raised seven children, of whom at least one of the first three, who were all girls, died in infancy.[45] She probably came after her husband's death to live with her brother, James Tryon, Jr.,[46] one of the witnesses to her marriage to Hezekiah. Hezekiah and Eliza did not join Simeon's family in the Mormon Church.

Simeon and his father were not neighbors in Rome Township for very long, since around 1849 Hezekiah and new wife moved back to Michigan, and Simeon moved his growing family to North East Township in Erie County, which was about 35 miles north of Rome and about 16 miles northeast of the thriving port town of Erie, Pennsylvania. By this time Alonzo was 12, William was 10, Walter was eight, Charles was six, Chloe Ann was three, and Stephen was one.[47]



Nelson's Biographical Dictionary and Historical Reference Book of Erie County, Pennsylvania, 1896. Digitally enhanced by Bill Klauk.

About a year after the Atwoods left his flock, Elder Stephen Post visited his brother Warren, who by then had become a Strangite apostle in Voree, Wisconsin, to examine three brass plates that Strang claimed he had found buried at the base of a tree. Post was

[44] No official record for that marriage exists. Eliza swore before a notary on November 12, 1878, that she had made every possible effort to obtain one, and presented notarized statements of witnesses to the date and place. See War of 1812 Pension, Folder 3, in *FamilySearch* Memories for Hezekiah Atwood III LZPB-2PP.

[45] If the other two survived, they would have been 29 and 26 years old, and I have no evidence they came to Pennsylvania with their mother. Eliza's first son, Frederick, was 23, married, and never left Connecticut. Twenty-one year old Mary Jane had been married a year earlier and remained in Connecticut. Eighteen year old Charles had not yet married, but apparently also stayed in Connecticut. Her youngest son, James Christopher, who was then 14, probably came to New York with her.

[46] After her brother's marriage in Litchfield, Connecticut 1824 he and his brother David became early settlers in Crawford County in 1828, founding Tryonville. They built a sawmill on Oil Creek in 1833 and later a grist mill. The Methodists met in the Tryon house before 1830 and James Tryon became the first school master there. A Post family (probably Stephen's, brother, Warren) built in Tryonsville in 1837.

[47] Erie County was created March 12, 1800, and included what later became Crawford County for the first three years. The town of Erie quickly grew as an important port on Lake Erie, especially after it got the contract to build the warships that Commodore Perry sailed against the British for the Battle of Lake Erie in 1812. By the time the Atwoods moved there it was in important seaport and industrial city. The county had over 38,000 residents in 1850. (Crawford had 38,000 as well).

disappointed and felt that they were a forgery made from a teakettle. He had already become alienated from the sect when Strang embraced polygamy in 1849. In 1850 Strang moved his congregation to Beaver Island in the north of Lake Michigan, establishing St. James Township there and having himself coronated King on July 8.

In the 1850 census, Simeon's family was on the 64th of 67 pages of North East Township in the census, which suggests that they lived some distance from the population center. The three villages in the township were Northville, which straddled the New York/Pennsylvania border, Freeport on the coast, and the village of North East Freeport, all of which had residents on the earlier pages of the census. The Atwoods were more likely near Grahamville, a farming area few miles inland.[48] Interestingly, 24 year old Charles Atwood, Simeon's youngest brother, was living with the family, listed as a farm laborer. I believe that Simeon was also working on a farm for one of his neighbors, all of whom either owned farms or worked for farmers, but he was preparing for another move that would finally solidify his financial position.

The same census found Simeon's uncle, Solomon Atwood, living relatively close to him in Harmony, Chautauqua, New York. Solomon owned 30 acres of land of which 12 were improved. Harmony was about 30 miles from North East Township, where Simeon was living, and about the same distance from Rome Township, so it is possible that they had maintained their relationship. Solomon was by this time sixty-five years old, living with his wife Betsy and no children.[49]

Simeon's sister Lydia and her new husband Daniel Bennett remained in Rome in 1850. Included in his large family was her 14 year old son Sylvester. I have not been able to figure out where her younger children, Abbie and Heman, were.

Hezekiah does not appear in the 1850 census, but I am sure that he was in Michigan at that time, working hard to get a veteran's pension and land grant in Michigan. This is when he obtained the physician evaluations of his disabilities that I mentioned in chapter one. On September 28, 1850, Congress had granted 160 acres of land to veterans in his category.[50] Unfortunately, Simeon's papers to prove his honorable discharge based on disability had been lost long ago in the military bureaucracy. I think he finally won the pension, but not the land. He submitted a formal claim to bounty land at Ft. Winnebago, Wisconsin, but there is no record that he ever received it.[51]

By the time that the twins Doctor Turrell and Hannah Maria were born on July 7, 1851, the Atwood family had moved from North East to Mooreheadville, a tiny family settlement of farmers in Harbor Creek Township just across its border with North East Township. Sadly, Hannah Marie died at the age of six weeks.

This is where Simeon became a brick maker. His experience as a potter's apprentice would have given him a great start on this profession. He would already have been trained in selecting clay, working it, and tending the firing process in a kiln. And now he had three sons as his apprentices. To have a

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[48] I say this because the several Graham families in the census were also listed in the latter pages of the census, appearing both before and after the Atwoods.

[49] Solomon was still in Harmony in 1860, but moved to Busti by 1865, just 10 miles further east. They are said to have died in Alma, Gratiot County, Michigan in 1874 and 1872.

[50] The act granted 160 acres to soldiers who engaged to serve at least 12 months and actually served at least six.

[51] https://glorecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx#searchTabIndex=0&searchByTypeIndex=0

successful brickmaking business, not only is a supply of suitable clay, sand, and wood necessary, but also a cheap way to move the finished product. I believe that Simeon located on Twelve Mile Creek, which gave ready access to transportation by barge on Lake Erie. Freight and passenger rail service were also available as early as 1853. The line followed the coast of Lake Erie from Dunkirk[52] through North East, Harbor Creek, and Erie townships, making train travel readily available to the Atwoods which could have aided their brick business as well.[53]

Simeon and Melissa's ninth child, Amelia Melissa, was born at Mooreheadville, Harbor Creek on November 21, 1853. By this time their three oldest boys were 12-15 and probably working full time making bricks. I suspect Simeon's 26 year old brother Charles was employed there as well, but in 1855 Charles married Mary Hayes in Erie and settled in Union City, about 23 miles southeast of Harbor Creek.[54] There they had daughters in 1857 and 1861 named Quito and Lydia.[55]

12 Mile Creek where it enters Lake Erie

It is not clear whether the Atwoods were still in contact with their missionary Stephen Post at this time. There had never been a branch formally organized in Crawford County. Post traveled around the county preaching and baptizing, and only preached once a month or so in Rome. Sometimes people gathered in the schoolhouse to hear him preach, but generally they met at members' homes. Now the Atwoods were separated from Elder Post by about 35 miles, and probably saw him rarely, if ever. There were a few LDS church members in the town of Erie, which was about nine miles from the Atwoods, and a few in the surrounding township of North East and in the village of Wattsburg about 18 miles south of them not far from Union City, but there were no organized branches there either and no regular meetings.

By 1855 Elder Post's faith had drifted farther away from the Utah Mormons, and also from the Strangites. In May he received a letter from his brother Warren in Beaver Island reporting on his own missionary work for the Strangites. Warren had just returned from Council Bluffs, having recruited about 50 former Saints who had not followed Brigham Young to Utah. Warren wrote, "I am aware that

[52] The New York and Erie Railway from New York City to Dunkirk was completed on May 18, 1851. Secretary of State Daniel Webster rode the initial run sitting in a rocking chair on a flat car, making speeches at every stop along the way.

[53] https://sites.rootsweb.com/~paerie/bates/batesharbor.htm Also see the maps on this website, especially the Library of Congress map 1852.

[54] The town of Union had been established that very year in Union Township, Erie County, when the mills were rebuilt, a store was opened, and some lots were sold. The new railroad ran through the township on several bridges.

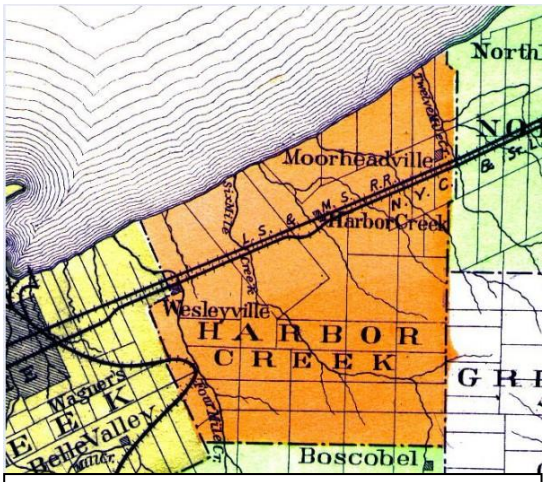
[55] Their next child, Della May was born July 1867 in Omaha. It seems possible that they may have gone part way west in 1862 with Simeon's group but dropped out before the trek to Utah. By 1870 they were in Appleton, Outagamie, Wisconsin, where Charles was a physician.

you think you are serving the God of Heaven, but you are serving the God of Babylon."[56] Stephen Post had become a devout follower of Sidney Rigdon.

George Noble Atwood was born at Harbor Creek November 16, 1857. This was during the time that the Nauvoo Legion in Deseret was defending the canyons into the valley from the advance of Col. Albert Sidney Johnston's army, causing them to spend the winter at Fort Bridger.

Simeon and Melissa's 10 year old boy, Stephen Turrell Atwood, died six months later. On February 23, 1858, their oldest son Alonzo married Mary Sophronia Barber at Harbor Creek. A year and a half later Alonzo's daughter, Melissa Ann, was born on October 23, just a week after Harper's Ferry was raided by the abolitionist, John Brown.

In the 1860 census for Harbor Creek Simeon Atwood was shown residing in Mooreheadville as a 46 year old master brickmaker owning real estate worth $1,000. I looked at his 20 closest neighbors to try to assess how much land Simeon possessed. Seven were farmhands or tradesmen and possessed no land. The 13 farmers possessed land ranging from $1,000 to $9,000 in value (average $3,600), so in comparison, his acreage was small, but a brick yard requires much less space than a farm. Melissa was 41. Alonzo, his new wife Mary, and daughter Melissa, now eight months old, were in the same household. The four oldest boys aged 16-23 were also denoted as brickmakers. Sylvester Rew, Lydia Amelia Atwood's oldest son was living a little distance away, but still in Harbor Creek Township with his wife and one child. He was listed as a farmer, but with no real estate, so he was a farmhand on someone else's land.



Nelson's Biographical Dictionary and Historical Reference Book of Erie County, Pennsylvania, 1896. Digitally enhanced by Bill Klauk.

Simeon's father Hezekiah appears in the 1860 census in Buffalo, Marquette, Wisconsin living with his second wife, Eliza, her youngest son James Perkins, and James' wife Sarah, who had immigrated with her family from England to Columbia County, Wisconsin when she was eight years old. Greenville, Wisconsin, where Simeon's sister Lydia was married to Hume Lothrop, was 80 miles further northeast from Buffalo, near Green Bay and in the same vicinity as Appleton, where her brother Charles later became a physician and Neenah, where Alpheus settled.

The church now known as The Community of Christ,[57] was legally organized April 6, 1860, in Amboy, Illinois. It included many of Joseph Smith's family, many of the now leaderless Strangites, and other

[56] The following year on June 20th Strang was shot to death at Beaver Island, and his followers were driven away and scattered. Many of them took part in the church that was formally organized April 6, 1860, in Amboy, Illinois as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The name differed from the Utah group only by the omission of the hyphen in Latter-day. In 1872 the word "Reorganized" was added to the title, and the RLDS Church located their headquarters at Lamoni, Iowa, close to Garden Grove on the 1846 pioneer trail. They acquired a quit claim deed to the Kirtland Temple in 1880 and later re-established their headquarters at Independence, Missouri.

[57] The Community of Christ was known from 1872 to 2001 as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS). I will use RLDS article because it is the term best known among most of my readers.

Simeon Atwood

former Mormons who opposed polygamy and rejected the ascendancy of Brigham Young as prophet and president of the church. Four months later in August 1860 William W. Blair, an apostle for the newly organized church, visited Kirtland[58] looking for converts among the disaffected Mormons living there, among them James Twist.[59] Blair wrote that he attended a meeting with Brother Ames (James) Blakeslee[60] and Martin Harris[61] on the top floor in the priesthood room of the Kirtland Temple where Simeon Atwood, an elder in the "Brighamite Church" from Erie, Pennsylvania and Leonard Rich[62] of Kirtland were the speakers.[63] Br. Atwood undertook to preach a discourse on the new covenant, taking his text from Hebrews, but failing of success, he in a few moments sat down. The meeting was interrupted by a long-haired stranger who sprang to his feet, uttered an unearthly yell, and jumped up onto the speakers' table. The two speakers and Martin Harris scattered, and the audience ran for the doors in panic while the man ranted and tore his clothes. He was later discovered to be a prominent spiritual medium from New York City named Increase Van Dusen.[64]

I would love to understand more about Simeon's role in this event. Kirtland was only 83 miles from his home and a direct train ride, but why would Simeon be speaking in the Kirtland Temple? Some family histories and Simeon's obituary[65] state that Simeon was the branch president at Erie, but that was not the case, as I will later show. Perhaps when Simeon left Rome, Stephen Post gave him some other sort of leadership role. Simeon's appearance as a speaker in association with an ex-official of Sidney Rigdon's church could be interpreted as evidence that Stephen Post was having an influence on him. However, Blair identified Simeon as a "Brighamite," which suggests that he was loyal to the Utah Mormons. Maybe Simeon was in Kirtland acting as a missionary and trying to convert disaffected Kirtland members just like Blair. Or possibly he was there to debate Rich.

On February 16, 1861, Simeon took his family to the town of Erie to witness a speech given by Abraham Lincoln, who had been elected to his first term as President of the United States and was making a whistlestop tour from Springfield, Illinois to Washington, D.C. for his inauguration. Twenty years later Simeon and his sons Alonzo and Charles described the speech in a sworn deposition before Charles D.

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[58] "Memoirs-No. III," *The Saints' Herald* 37 (12 July 1890): 460-61, reprinted in Frederick B. Blair, *The Memoirs of President W. W. Blair* (Lamoni, Iowa, 1908), 35-38.

[59] Twist had joined Sidney Rigdon in Pittsburg in the fall of 1844 and according to his obituary moved to Kirtland in 1852.

[60] Blakeslee was a former Eastern States missionary and later joined the RLDS.

[61] Martin Harris was not a follower of Rigdon, but he had joined the Strangites and went briefly to England on mission for them after which he left them in 1847 to join the Whitmerites in Kirtland, and then another group led by Gladden Bishop, which Harris joined in 1855 along with William Smith, the prophet's brother. His wife left him for Utah in 1856. Martin Harris himself eventually moved to Utah in 1870, was re-baptized, and lived in Cache Valley.

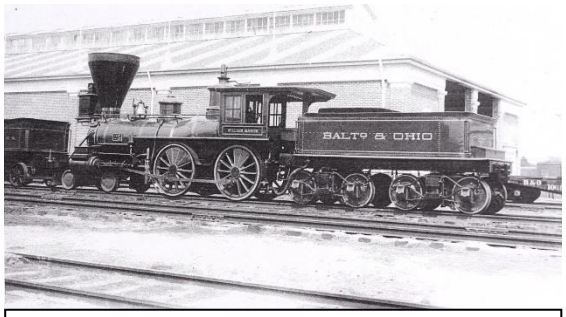
[62] In 1845 Rich was President of Quorum of Seventies in Sidney Rigdon's church, which became defunct two years later.

[63] See "*Simeon Atwood in the Kirtland Temple*" in Simeon's memories in *FamilySearch*.

[64] *The Saints' Herald*, vol. 37 [12 July 1890].

[65] *Evening News*, June 8, 1889.

Evans, notary public.[66] Lincoln spoke to thousands of people of Erie in the "upper door of the house of the Railroad Hotel at the depot," stating that "he would put down the twin relics of barbarism. A heavy salute was fired. He there stated that he would put down the Rebellion in ninety days and would sink it so deep that the Gulf of Mexico could not find it. And then said he 'We will turn our attention to Utah and clean it out before breakfast.' Old Walker,[67] one of the greatest lawyers of Pennsylvania, held him by the arm while he made his speech. A salute was then fired in honor of the speech."



Engine thought to have pulled Lincoln's train.

Later that day Lincoln also spoke in North East and in Dunkirk (among about ten other stops) before retiring for the night in Buffalo.[68] Two weeks after the president-elect's visit, 13 year old Chloe Ann Atwood died at Harbor Creek.

On April 12, Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter in South Carolina's Charleston harbor. The Civil War had begun.

Two months later another missionary changed the course of Simeon's life. This was 32 year old James Arthur McKnight, a private secretary to Brigham Young and the editor and printer of the *Deseret News*. Born to Catholic parents in Ireland who immigrated to Cleveland, Ohio in 1835, he disappointed his mother, who had wanted him to become a priest, by becoming a Mormon and joining them in Salt Lake City in 1852. Like Stephen Post, McKnight kept a detailed journal[69] which sheds important light on the Atwood story.

Elder James McKnight

Elder McKnight traveled the pioneer trail eastward from Salt Lake City with a large group of fellow missionaries during the fall of 1860 and began his proselyting in his hometown of Cleveland and the surrounding area for about six months until he felt inspired to walk the 24 miles to Kirtland on May 8, 1861. He called first on Martin Harris, then on Hiram Stratton and Christopher Dixon, and spoke to what he described as an attentive group. Like William Blair, the RLDS apostle who visited Kirtland the previous

[66] See page 48 in this biography.
[67] John Hoge Walker, former speaker of Pennsylvania Senate.
[68] Here is Lincoln's story of his visit to Westfield, the next stop after North East. "Some three months ago, I received a letter from a young lady here; it was a very pretty letter, and she advised me to let my whiskers grow, as it would improve my personal appearance; acting partly upon her suggestion, I have done so; and now, if she is here, I would like to see her;" . . . A small boy, mounted on a post, with his mouth and eyes both wide open, cried out, ``there she is, Mr. Lincoln,'' pointing to a beautiful girl, with black eyes, who was blushing all over her fair face. The President left the car, and the crowd making way for him, he reached her, and gave her several hearty kisses, and amid the yells of delight from the excited crowd, he bade her good-bye.
https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/lincolns-whistle-stop-trip-to-washington-161974/
[69] Church History Library MS 1433.

summer, Elder McKnight was searching among the remaining Latter-day Saints in Kirtland for converts. He wrote in his journal that Lester Brooks, the leader of a new sect, had recently put a new roof on the temple, and didn't allow him to speak there, so he held a well-attended meeting at the home of Brother Dixon. He noted in his diary that "Martin Harris follows me wherever I go. He wants to talk and to hear. Sometimes he is greatly darkened in mind." Like Blair, Elder McKnight visited James Twist, observing that he was "spiritually dead beyond resurrection." For a month he visited every former Mormon that he could find, usually accompanied by Christopher Dixon.[70]

On Saturday, June 9, 1861, McKnight wrote, "In the afternoon having taken dinner, Br. Dixon hitched up his buggy and started with me for Erie, Pa., having previously signified my desire to go there, as I was impressed to do by the Spirit." They spent the first night in Harbor Creek at a private house, and the next morning drove to Simeon Atwood's for breakfast and stayed until the next day. On the 11th they drove eight miles[71] to Mrs. Huldah L. Tucker's[72] in North East township near the New York state line. They drove over the border and drank state line ale and returned the next day to North East and drove 12 miles to Mr. J.J.M. Butler's[73] in Wattsburg, who gave them a cordial greeting. "We found Simon and his wife, who met us there. It seemed that we should never get tired talking tonight and we had encroached upon the 'wee short hours about the twal'[74] ere anyone thought of bedtime." The next morning, they left Butler's with Simeon and Melissa for the town of Erie, about 15 miles away, for dinner at Mr. Soules, who with his wife were "old-time Mormons, but evidently never had a very thorough introduction into the merits of the system. However, they treated us with great kindness." At that time, his temporary companion Christopher Dixon started back for Kirtland, leaving the missionary on his own and without transportation. Several people visited Elder McKnight at Soules', having heard that an elder from Salt Lake City was there. One of these was James Van Natta, a returned Mormon missionary who was a professional sailor on Lake Erie but had time on his hands because his ship had run aground and was out of commission. They returned together to Van Natta's home to stay, and the young captain became Elder McKnight's new companion.

The two visited the editor of the Erie newspaper, the *Dispatch and Observer*, who printed notices at no charge for a meeting the missionaries were setting up for the coming Sunday at Farrar Hall, a theater on

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[70] Dixon was a Canadian who had joined the Mormon Church in 1838 after moving to Kirtland a year earlier. On his journey to join the Saints in Missouri he met them as they were being expelled and stopped in Quincy for the winter. Later he returned to Kirtland and never made it to Nauvoo.

[71] This supports my theory that Atwoods were living on Twelve Mile Creek on Moorehead Road in Harbor Creek, since it is eight miles from the New York border.

[72] Hulda Louise Fisk MM28-4RY, was a 54 year old widow and a sister to Ira Fisk, a Mormon widower who had lived in Kirtland in the 1840s and was now living nearby in the village of Evans in North East Township. She had been baptized in October 1838 by William Marks, the stake president in Kirtland. Marks was called on July 8, 1838 to be the stake president at Far West, but by the time he reached Far West the Saints had been expelled, and he stopped at Quincy. If Huldah was baptized by him in October, it must have been in Kirtland, just before he left. In Nauvoo he was again appointed stake president and was there when the prophet was killed. He sided with Sidney Rigdon and was rejected from the Council of Fifty Feb 4, 1845. He joined the Strangites and later the RLDS in 1859 and became a member of their first presidency. Hulda's husband, David Tucker, died in 1847 in North East. At the time of Elder McKnight's visit, her children had left the home.

[73] John Jackson Munsee Butler was born in New York in 1812. He was trained in the Wesleyan Seminary, but when his wife encouraged the missionaries to visit, he was baptized in 1843. He first immigrated to Deseret in 1856 and transported several companies across the plains before returning to Vanango Township.

[74] "The twal" is a Scottish term for midnight [twelve].

the upper floor of a complex of business buildings that had been built the previous year and could seat 1,500 people. On Saturday when McKnight and Van Natta returned to the captain's house they found Simeon Atwood and his wife awaiting them, having come from Harbor Creek to attend the meeting.

McKnight wrote that he was pleased with the meetings which were held at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. the next day, writing that "the house was not full by considerable, but a goodly number present, and attention undivided." Due to the ongoing war, there was much interest in Joseph Smith's prophesy[75] given in 1843 concerning the rebellion of South Carolina, which McKnight arranged to have printed in the *Observer*.

He and Van Natta visited the Soules again, but finally gave up on them, writing "they are too nearly fanatic to have any relish for anything coming from any ordinary soul." The two elders visited all the members they could find in Erie County during the following ten days, and then hired a carriage Sunday morning and arrived at J. J. M. Butler's home for meetings at 11 am, 3 pm and evening. At the evening meeting branches of the Church were organized for Erie and Wattsburg. The sacrament was administered, and James H. Van Natta was ordained to preside at Erie and Elder J. J. M. Butler at Venango Township (Wattsburg.)[76]

The next Sunday the Atwoods attended the Erie Branch meeting at Van Natta's house and drove Elder McKnight home with them to Harbor Creek. On the way they discussed a spectacular comet that had been lighting the sky. He wrote, "The remarkable comet elicits much talk."[77] The missionary stayed with the Atwoods most of the week and visited some "colored saints" named Logan.[78] They got permission to hold a meeting at the schoolhouse which had a large attendance and good attention. McKnight wrote that a couple half drunken fellows came to the meeting saying they were sent by some of the good Christian ministers. They made a noise but were silenced by the Atwood boys (by this time they were 24, 22, 20, and 17 and probably very fit from making and hauling bricks) and took their departure. In the process their horse took fright and overturned their carriage, throwing them out and injuring them, dragging one of them several rods and narrowly escaping death. It proved to them an expensive attempt to disturb a Mormon meeting.

Melissa Ann Atwood

Here Elder McKnight's journal ended abruptly, but not his mission. He was presiding over parts of Iowa, Michigan, New York, and Ohio, and soon moved on, leaving the new branch presidents in charge of

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[75] D & C 130:12-13.

[76] In his *Erie Branch Historical Record* (Church History Library LR 1865 21) Van Natta wrote that the Wattsburg branch was organized November 17, 1861, for members of the Erie Branch who had to travel too far.

[77] The Great Comet of 1861 whose tail covered half the night sky was visible in the northern hemisphere for three months ending June 29. Astronomers calculated that the planet earth was actually in the tail of the comet.

[78] This was possibly Jeremiah Logan, a 24 year old teamster.

planning for the move to Zion. Branch President Van Natta provided the following further insight into the Atwood family and the Saints in Erie County.

On July 14, 1861 Elder McKnight rebaptized Simeon and Melissa in Erie[79] and Simeon was ordained an elder by him the same day. Peter and Phebe Munsee were also baptized.[80] A week later Alonzo and his wife Mary were baptized in Erie.

Elder Van Natta wrote that by September the Erie Branch numbered 19 souls including four or five who had not yet been baptized. They were meeting every Sabbath at his house, morning and afternoon, except for once at Butlers' in Wattsburg. Conference was observed on October 6. The members anticipated spending general conference a year later in Deseret. In December a subscription was made in the Erie branch for the construction of the Salt Lake Temple, which raised $30 including $4 from Simeon and $1 each from Alonzo and Melissa Atwood.

On April 6, 1862, the whole Ohio Conference met in Wattsburg for three days. Elder McKnight had been delayed in his return from a westward tour of the conference, so another missionary, Elder David Minkler, represented him with Van Natta presiding. The Monday session opened with prayer followed by several hours of dancing with visiting for the rest of the day. All the speakers were elders, but all members were permitted to bear testimony. In the Erie record, Van Natta wrote that after this conference, "We continued our meetings at Br. Simeon Atwood's in Erie (sic)[81] on Sunday and Thursday Evening. At Br. Joab Slocum's, there was some interested in the principles of the Gospel, and all that had made arrangements to go to Utah were to start on the 19 June 62."

Elder McKnight returned soon after the conference to help prepare the Erie members to depart for Deseret. On April 20 he baptized 14 year old Doctor Atwood and his 23 year old cousin, Heman Rew, and four days later he baptized Amelia Melissa, who had turned eight.

On June 15, the day before their departure from Erie, Elder McKnight ordained Sylvester Rue an elder and left him in charge of the few members that were left with instruction to keep awake and gather with the Church as soon as possible.[82]

On June 16, according to the biography of Peter Munsee, the 41 Erie saints traveled together by train to Council Bluffs, where the tracks ended. They stayed there about six weeks, purchasing teams, wagons, and supplies for the trip.

The Erie and Wattsburg Branch members crossed the plains in several different wagon parties. On July 28[83] the Atwoods departed Florence for Salt Lake City in the James S. Brown Company with 200 immigrants in 46 wagons and 300 head of stock. Simeon was 48 and Melissa was 43. They took six unmarried children. Three were adult males (William, Walter, and Charles) and three were under 12

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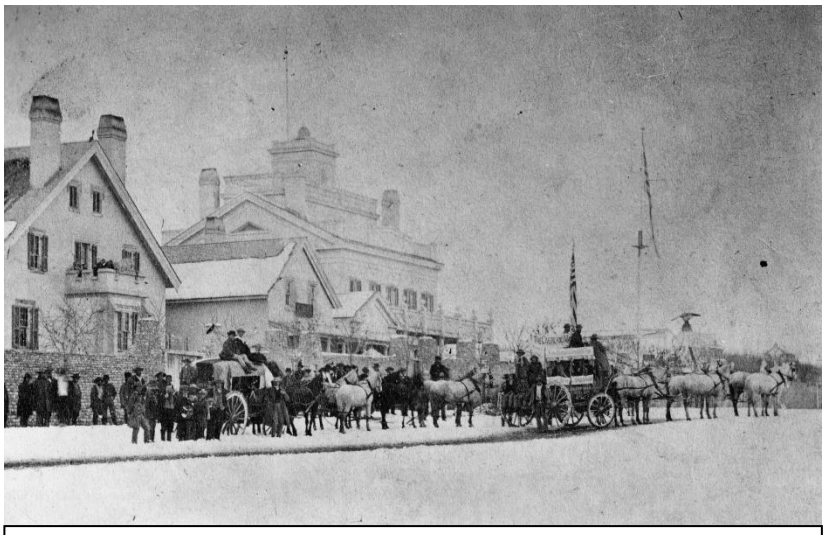
[79] Erie branch records, Church History Library LR 1865 21 (100000535743).
[80] The Munsees were from Wattsburg, Venango Township, relatives of J. J. M. Butler.
[81] Simeon lived in Harbor Creek. Did he have two houses?
[82] Sylvester's first two children were born in Erie and Crawford Counties, but his third and fourth sons, Sylvester and Osmer Moroni were both born in Deseret, Millard County in 1864 and 1867, so he must have followed later. Before March 1870 the family had moved to Black Creek, Outagamie, Wisconsin and lived there until about 1880 when they moved to Lamoni, Iowa, the home of the RLDS.
[83] This is the same date that James McKnight departed with the Canfield Company. Also with the Canfield company were J. J. M. Butler, Christopher Dixon, and James Van Natta.

(Doctor, 11, Amelia, eight, and George, four.) Simeon and Melissa's oldest son, Alonzo, and his wife Mary Barber brought a two year old and a 15 month toddler. Simeon was appointed a Captain of Ten. His son Walter Henry was sergeant-at-arms for the train. Twenty-three year old William suffered from severe illness on the trek. Doctor Atwood and John Dixon[84] were given the cows to tend and herd. Van Natta wrote that Heman Rew also immigrated in 1862 to Utah, but Heman does not show up in the Pioneer Database. He was 23 and unmarried.[85]

The Simeon Atwood family arrived in Salt Lake City on October 2, 1862.



A Pioneer Ox Train arriving in Salt Lake City ca. 1860
Courtesy Utah Division of State History

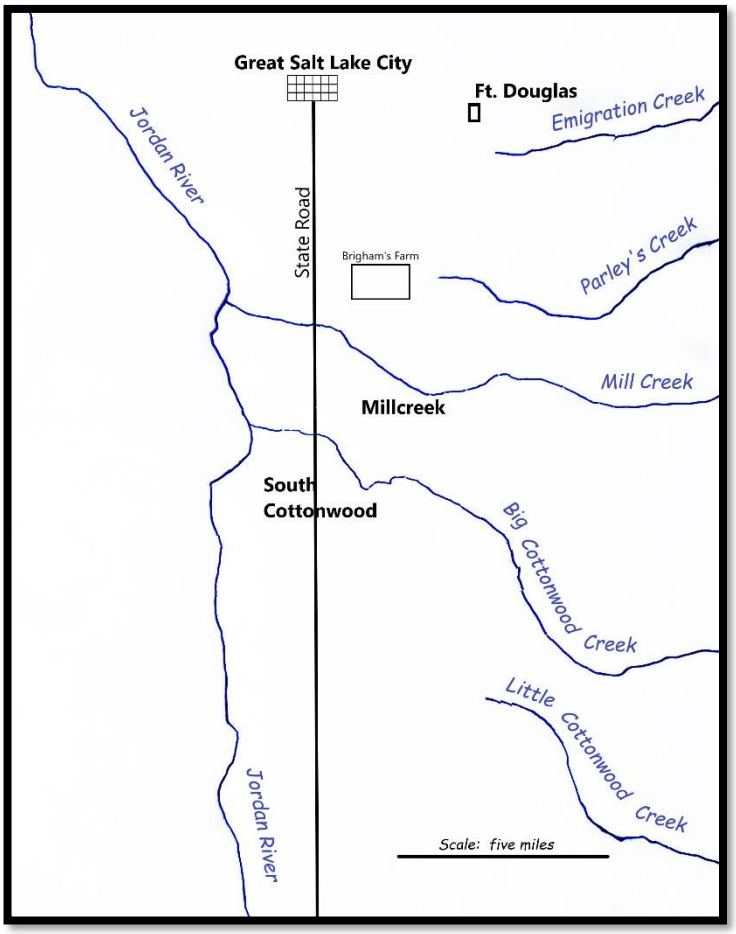
[84] This was probably Christopher Dixon's 12 year old son, John Henry Dixon, who is listed with his father in the Canfield Company in the pioneer database. The two companies left the same day and probably traveled together most of the way.

[85] *FamilySearch* shows that Heman married Polly Ann Pulsipher October 15, 1864, in Salt Lake City, but that he died in Wisconsin. He also appears in the South Cottonwood Ward records: "Received September 21, 1865." No baptisms or personal data are shown, but there is an entry "cut off—Jan 16, 1870," apparently excommunicated. Heman and Polly had children born in Utah in 1866, Oregon in 1868, Idaho in 1869, and then Wisconsin in 1873 and 1877, finally Lamoni, Iowa in 1880. I wonder whether Heman's mother Lydia ever went to Deseret—is it possible that she was for a time in Utah with Sylvester? She left her husband Bennett between 1860 and 1870 to marry Hume Lathrop. He died in 1879 and she married Truman Bailey in Lamoni. Obviously, that branch of the Atwoods joined the RLDS.

Chapter 5 – Deseret

While the Atwoods were making their way along the Old Mormon Trail, the Civil War was in its second year and things were not going well for the Union. On August 28, 1862, Robert E. Lee and his army won the Second Battle of Bull Run followed two weeks later by a victory at Harper's Ferry. The Battle of Antietam on September 17th ended in a draw with 22,000 troops killed on the two sides, but it was close enough to a win to encourage President Lincoln to publish the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, for implementation on the first day of 1863. One Atwood historian surmised that one of the reasons for the Atwoods' emigration from Pennsylvania was fear of the draft for Simeon's four eligible sons, but the first draft in America's history did not occur until March 1863.

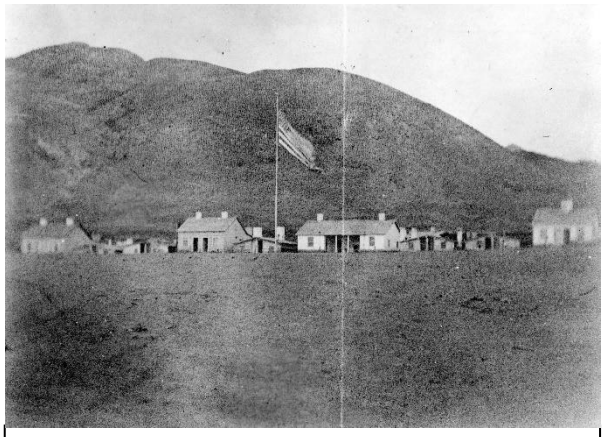
Upon arrival the Atwoods settled immediately on Brigham Young's farm in Millcreek.[86] On October 26 Simeon Atwood was rebaptized and confirmed in the Millcreek Ward, a common occurrence for newly arrived immigrants. Alonzo Atwood was also rebaptized that day along with 36 others.[87]



While on the trail they would likely have known little of the war's recent battles, but they found upon arrival that the war was affecting the Saints in Utah. On the positive side, Johnston's army, which had been encamped on the southwest hills of the valley, was disbanded at the outset of the war in 1861, much to the relief of the saints.[88] But recently, Colonel Patrick E. Connor was sent with troops to Utah to protect the overland routes from Indians, guard the telegraph lines, and quell a possible Mormon uprising.

[86] Parker, page 445.
[87] Church History Library, Record of Members Collection CR 375 8, Millcreek Ward.
[88] General Albert Sidney Johnston chose to fight for the Confederacy and was killed at the Battle of Shiloh about April 7, 1862 during the Erie Branch's last conference before embarking for Utah.

Two days after Simeon's rebaptism, Connor with seven companies of his Third Regiment of California Volunteers established Camp Douglas[89] in the foothills east of Salt Lake City in honor of the "Little Giant" of the Senate, Stephen A. Douglas, who had died a year earlier, undoubtedly causing much concern for the Mormons.



Fort Douglas ca. 1864
Courtesy Utah Division of State History

A biography of Simeon's son Walter states that a short time after Walter had entered the valley, President Brigham Young called him to stand guard at the Eagle Gate and keep people from trespassing. Walter was a sharpshooter, who had been assigned to produce game during the crossing and acted as night guard, and Brigham was fearing arrest. That may be so, but while it is true that Connor did engage in an acrimonious and bitter cold war with Brigham Young, he never tried to arrest the Mormon leader and left Utah in 1865.

Some of the Atwood family biographies claim that Simeon had a relationship with Brigham Young long before arriving in Utah. One states, "The entire family was acquainted with President Brigham Young before coming here."[90] I've looked for evidence to support this claim. Certainly, Brigham Young would have been acquainted with Simeon during his teen years if he was apprentice to the prophet's good friend Heber C. Kimball. It also seems possible that Brigham may have had brief contact with the newlywed Simeon when the future prophet visited Dunkirk on his mission in 1835, but that seems unlikely since Simeon had not yet joined the Church. I think it is much more likely that Brigham's former personal secretary, the missionary James McKnight,[91] who had just arrived with his Erie Branch immigrants, introduced the capable Atwood family to the prophet.[92] The other branch members scattered to other settlements.[93]

On December 13, 1862, Simeon and Melissa went to the Endowment House to receive their personal endowments. However, they were not sealed in marriage.[94] Maurine Cowan Miller wrote[95] that one descendant claimed that Melissa was endowed that day but had been too sick to stay for the sealing. She returned home and never left her sick bed, so it didn't get done before she died.

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[89] It was renamed Fort Douglas in 1878.
[90] History of Walter Henry Atwood "My Grandfather" taken from the *History of Murray City*, Utah, 1976.
[91] Upon arrival in Utah McKnight returned to his neglected family on Second West, just a few blocks from President Young. Three months later he married a third wife, Harriet Painter, and in July he married a fourth, young Mary Ann Fielding, daughter of Joseph Fielding, the first missionary to England.
[92] It seems curious to me that there is little evidence of contact between Heber C. Kimball and the adult Simeon Atwood.
[93] Christopher F. Dixon went to Payson. John Jackson Munsee Butler and Peter Munsee went to Weber, Ira Fisk went to North Ogden.
[94] According to her *FamilySearch* Ordinances section, Melissa was posthumously sealed to Simeon in the Endowment House on September 23, 1865.
[95] See Memories for Melissa in *FamilySearch*, Compiled History by Maurine Miller.

On February 21, 1863, Simeon was ordained a high priest.

Brigham Young's Forest Farm House

Brigham Young's farm, where Simeon was employed, bordered the Five Acre Plots of the Big Field.[96] That description made sense at the time, but here is a more useful description for modern readers. The farm was about 850 acres[97] between what is now 21st South and 27th South and from 3rd East to 13th East, about four miles from downtown Salt Lake City. Initially it included a pioneer farmhouse of adobe with a milk and cheese house a few feet away connected by a closed porchway. Other structures included an 18 x 69 foot log cabin built in 1857. Construction had begun in 1861 on a more modern cottage of generous proportions called "The Forest Farmhouse,"[98] designed to Brigham's specifications by Truman Angell, the architect of the Salt Lake Temple and many other pioneer buildings.[99] It featured a second-story ballroom, spring water storage in the basement, and a farm manager's office. The new house was not completed until 1863, so Simeon may have helped with the finished carpentry during the winter months when the farm was relatively idle. While the house was being built the men were in tents and wagon boxes, and their wives helped with the cooking. I don't know whether Simeon's family was among those in wagon boxes or were accommodated in the large log house. There is some evidence that they lived outside the farm.[100]

The farm was intended to experiment with seeds and plants to find products suitable to Utah's environment such as grain, potatoes, corn, sugar beets, mulberry, and black locust trees, but it was also the source of food for Brigham Young's immense family, supplying them with milk, butter, cheese, and vegetables. It required a large group of hired hands, teams, wagons, and other equipment to operate.[101] Beginning in 1852, adobe bricks were made from a clay pit just south of the farm[102] for several structures in Salt Lake City. Perhaps this is one reason that Simeon was hired.

The hired men milked the cows, and Brigham's wife and daughters produced the cheese and butter and also produced dinner at night for the farm workers. Only one of Brigham's wives worked at a time on

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[96] Alex Stromberg, Brigham Young's Forest Farmhouse: Space and Power in 19th Century Agricultural Utah. https://www.eiu.edu/historia/Stromberg2015.pdf

[97] By 1864 (probably before Simeon left the farm) some of the land was opened to settlers and the farm was reduced to 650 acres.

[98] The Forest Farmhouse and Brigham Young's barn have been reconstructed and can be seen at *This is the Place Heritage Park* near the mouth of Emigration Canyon.

[99] Some of these were the Kirtland and Nauvoo Temples, the Salt Lake Tabernacle, and the St. George Temple.

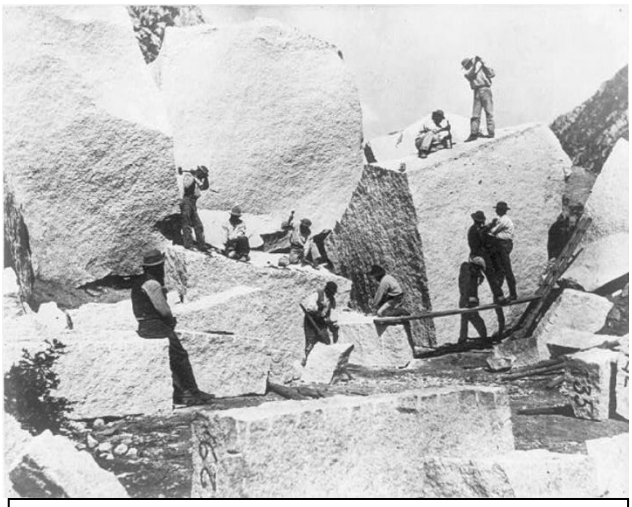
[100] Walter's bio (quoting Walter's grandson Albert H. Atwood) says that when they first arrived they settled at Garden Grove on Mill Creek. I couldn't locate Garden Grove, but this suggests that they may not have lived right on the Brigham Young Farm.

[101] Elinor G. Hyde, *Brigham Young's Homes,* chapter: The Brigham Young Farm Home.

[102] This is now part of the Forest Dale Golf Club south of 2700 South.

the farm—they were rotated about every two to four years. When the Atwoods arrived, the wife living on the farm was Lucy Bigelow along with her six year old daughter, Susa Young.[103] Lucy was followed by Susan Snively and her nine year old daughter in 1863.

On March 26, 1863, Simeon and Melissa's 22 year old third son Walter married 17 year old Deidamia Dutton Stickney. Walter and Deidamia moved to Big Cottonwood Canyon and lived in a little lumber house to run a lumber mill at Brigham Young's request to supply lumber for the new tabernacle.[104] After the lumber was sawed it was dipped into hot lime water as a means of fire prevention. Henry wrote, "The lumber was hauled and stacked on the north side of South Temple Street. Pres. Young then had a lime kiln built on the spot north and west of Utah State Capitol Building. Simeon Atwood was in charge of the men to build vats and all the lumber was then dipped in the lime water to preserve it and also to keep it from burning."[105] Walter wrote that Simeon worked as a carpenter in Salt Lake City and helped to haul granite blocks from the canyon for the temple. Work had resumed on the temple in the fall of 1861 as soon as Johnston's army left the valley, and the granite quarry was opened in the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon. Oxen-drawn wagons were used to haul the blocks and a round trip took four days.[106] There was a railroad connected to the canyon with a junction near the Atwoods' brickmaking property, but not until April 1873.



Cutting Granite in Little Cottonwood Canyon
Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

That spring Simeon Atwood entered polygamy. By my count, Simeon eventually had a total of seven wives, most of whom came in and out of his life one at a time, but this was technically a plural marriage because Melissa was still living. The Atwoods had been in Deseret for just over half a year when on May 23, 1863, Simeon was sealed to Maria Thornton Williams, a 48 year old widow from Wales,[107] who had joined the Church around 1850. Her husband, John Williams, died four years before she came to Deseret in the fall of 1862 with her second daughter Mary Cox and two young grandchildren, the youngest of whom died after their first year in the Valley. Mary Cox[108] later married David Robert Williams, a coal miner from Wales and moved to Spanish Fork.

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[103] Susa Young Gates grew up to be an important suffragette, attending The National Women's Congress and founding the *Relief Society Magazine*.
[104] The old tabernacle, built hastily of adobe and seating only 2,500 people, was dedicated April 6, 1852. We are speaking of the famous tabernacle which still stands, begun in 1863 and first used in October 1867.
[105] CH Library MS 11299.
[106] www.utahrails.net/mining/granite/php
[107] Endowment House Sealings; 1861-1866; FHL film 183395, Special Collection; Book D, p. 213, #5857.
[108] According to Cox family records, Maria had broken up her daughter's marriage to Samuel Cox KWV6-744, a man she didn't approve of in the Breconshire, Wales Branch. Maria's oldest son, John Henry Williams, immigrated a year later. Her 28 year old daughter Ann who was probably married, never left England. Maria's son David had

That Simeon entered polygamy was surprising to me because Stephen Post, the missionary who had converted the Atwoods and was their spiritual leader for their first years in the Church, rejected the Brighamite branch, probably chiefly over the issue of polygamy.[109] But, of course, the Atwoods were also influenced by the missionary who brought them to Utah, James McKnight, who by July had already added two more plural wives to his family.

Endowment House around 1863.
Note the granite stones for the temple project.

Simeon and Maria Thornton Williams were sealed for time only,[110] and Maria received her endowment the same day.[111] I suspect this was a marriage of convenience brokered by Brigham Young and have been unable to find evidence that they ever lived together. If they did, it may have been only a short time, for there is no Maria Atwood (nor Thornton or Williams) in the Millcreek or South Cottonwood Ward records. None of the family histories of the Simeon Atwood or his children mention Maria Thornton, the only evidence of their marriage being the Endowment House record. Nor can I find evidence of a divorce.[112] Her daughter Mary had two young children to manage, and the younger of these died a year before she found a husband in 1864, so I suspect Maria stayed close by her. The only subsequent records that I have found for Maria are her re-baptism in the Spanish Fork Ward on July 4, 1878 and the 1880 census in which she was living with her daughter Mary and Mary's husband David Williams, who was probably working at the newly opened coal mine at Schofield. They were living in Spanish Fork at

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died in 1857 at the age of 16 and she had two younger children, Elizabeth and William, ages 19 and 16, who are unaccounted for.

[109] During this very period, Post was corresponding with Sidney Rigdon, an opponent of the doctrine of polygamy and would soon become a leader in Rigdon's church.

[110] The practice of sealing a couple for "time only" was primarily for women who had been sealed to a previous husband. It began in November 1843 when Hyrum Smith sealed Jacob Peart for "time and all eternity" to his deceased wife, Elizabeth Holden, with his second wife from a civil marriage, Phebe Robson, standing in as proxy, after which Hyrum sealed Phebe to Jacob for "time only." After Joseph Smith's death many sealings of both living and proxy wives to their husbands were repeated during the first two months of 1846 in the Nauvoo Temple. There were over 200 proxy sealings of which 68 were for time only. (Gary James Bergera, *Dialogue*, Vol. 35, issue 3, Fall 2002, p. 41-46.) Temple sealings for "time only" were discontinued May 24, 2021. (*Church News*, May 24, 2021.)

[111] BIRTH-B-E: TIB, Endowment House Records; #4438, Book D, p. 219; Thornton, Maria, (Williams), born 10 Dec 1814, Presteen, Radnor, N. Wales, to Edward Thornton and Maria, bapt(ized) abt. 1850, end(owed) 23 May 1863.

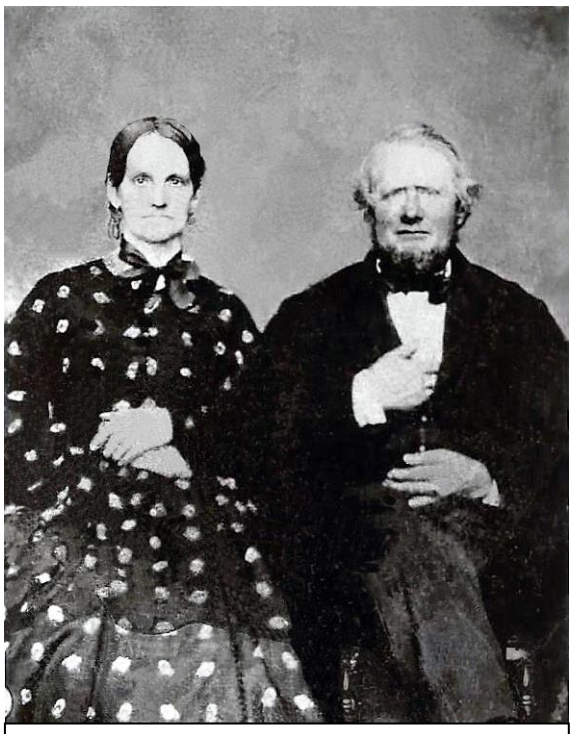
[112] This is not surprising. Although Brigham Young personally granted 1,645 divorces, most (if not all) to polygamists, most divorces were handled by bishop's courts, and some by a justice of the peace in a civil court. In those days there were also many separations without divorces, which was tolerated by Mormon society and not considered a barrier to another marriage. (Eugene and Bruce Campbell, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 46, 1978, No. 1.)

the same time as Simeon, which must have been a little awkward. Maria was listed as Maria Wardle, a widow.[113]

Three weeks after his marriage on June 17, Simeon wrote a letter[114] to Brigham Young explaining that he needed a little help in fencing poles, seed for barley and oats to sow, and also a bush scythe to cut willows on the plowed ground. He reported that he had plowed about 20 acres with 12 more to do. He also needed some instruction and a little help until after harvest.

The Battle of Gettysburg took place in Pennsylvania that July. There were over 57,000 casualties on the two sides together. Down the Mississippi, Vicksburg surrendered to General Grant the very next day. On July 13, 1863, over 50,000 New Yorkers rioted over the military draft.

On October 18th Melissa Turrell Atwood died at Millcreek, likely having been infected by one of the sick people she nursed. She was 44. This must have been a catastrophe for the family. Her only daughter was Amelia, who turned 10 only a month after her mother's death. As far I can determine, Maria Thornton was not around, so Amelia had to step up to be the mother. Doctor was almost 12 and George was only six. Of the four mature boys, only 24 year old William could have still been in the home. Alonzo had been married for two years, had three little children, and was living in Millcreek. Walter was newly married. Charles would be married a month later to Louise Brown.



Melissa and Simeon

During the winter of 1863-64 when work at Brigham Young's farm ended, Simeon bought a farm and moved his children to South Cottonwood.[115] Simeon's name appears in the record of members for South Cottonwood Ward on March 1, 1864, but no baptism was recorded for this date, only the word, "received." This must be the day that his membership was approved by the congregation.

Simeon had bought a farm in South Cottonwood, and may have continued his carpentry work, possibly on the Salt Lake Tabernacle, and hauling granite for the temple. On April 9th Simeon baptized two of his children, Doctor and Amelia. The same day he baptized another new ward member named Fanny Bennett. A year and a half later, Fanny and Simeon would be married. Here is the story behind that:

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[113] Maria was buried in the Spanish Fork City Cemetery in March 1884. *FamilySearch* gives her last husband as William Wardle without any dates or sources, but I can find no William Wardle or Wardell in Utah of the appropriate age who died before that census.

[114] You can read the hand-written original in Simeon's Memories in *FamilySearch*.

[115] South Cottonwood was not near Big or Little Cottonwood Canyon as one might suspect. It takes its name from Cottonwood Creek which enters the Jordan River around 4200 South and is now known as Murray.

The same month that Atwoods entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1862 there arrived on another wagon train a 17 year old English boy named Joshua Bennett. Trained as a groom and horseman in England, he got a job with President Young working with his horses and driving his carriage while working at Brigham's farm. He also drove ox teams to bring granite stones for the temple, so he must have known Simeon and his older boys through their work. A year later Joshua's mother, Fanny Bolton Bennett arrived in New York City. She was 44 and traveling alone according to the ship manifest. She was married to a professional house painter in England, 17 years her senior, whom she had evidently abandoned.[116] The Bennett family had joined the Church through the missionary work of Wilford Woodruff in the late 1840s. Fannie's immigration company is unknown, but her Perpetual Immigration Fund entry is marked 15 Oct 1863, which may be her date of arrival in Deseret.[117] Fanny is said to have gone to work at the Germania smelter at South Cottonwood upon arriving, but this is not possible, since the smelter did not open until 1872. But it seems likely that she arrived in Cottonwood around the time that she was re-baptized there.[118] In 1864, Fannie's son Joshua married Isabella Jane Holt and moved to South Cottonwood where he eventually worked at the Germania smelter. His name appeared in the South Cottonwood ward records when he baptized his son John Randall, who was born in South Cottonwood October 23, 1865.

It was probably in 1865[119] that Simeon set up his brick making operation under the name Atwood Brick Company.[120]

On April 9, 1865, the Battle of Appomattox Court House ended the American Civil War. President Lincoln was assassinated five days later.

Simeon was at the Endowment House again on September 29, 1865 with two tasks. He had himself sealed by proxy to Melissa, and on the same day he was sealed to his third wife, Fanny Bolton Bennett.

There is little doubt that Fanny could have been helpful in raising Simeon's younger children, but the marriage did not work out. In 1867 Simeon and Fanny separated, and she never remarried. Two of her biographers erroneously claim that Simeon died while working at a sawmill in Big Cottonwood Canyon and left her with all the children to raise, but in the 1880 census her status was listed as "divorced." And, of course, Simeon was still very much alive. At the age of 51 Fanny was still living in Cottonwood in 1880 under her former name of Fanny Bennett with a 25 year old male boarder. In her old age she lived with her son Joshua in Millard County and died there in 1908.

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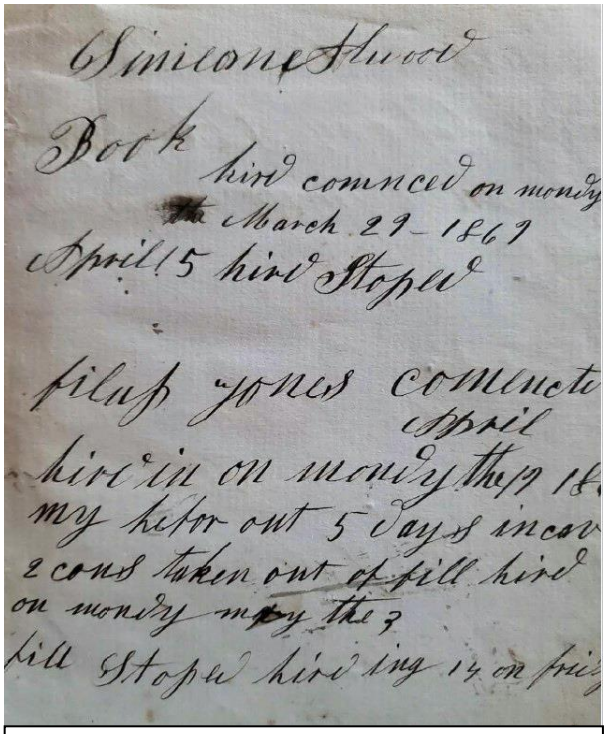
[116] Fanny's husband, Randle Bennett died April 11, 1864, in the Lovely Lane Workhouse in Warrington. Older men in workhouses at that time were usually paupers due to disabilities such as dementia or alcoholism. Although he was at home in the 1861 census, Fanny was the head of household in 1851, so Randle may have been erratic.
[117] Her married daughter, Fanny Mary Bennett Scott also immigrated, but arrived between 1871 and 1878.
[118] Interestingly, she was enrolled in the ward under her maiden name of Fanny Bolton, having dropped her married name of Bennett. Her last name was given as Bennett on her death certificate.
[119] Parker, *Beautiful Upon the Mountains*, p. 486.
[120] However, the earliest notations in Simeon's ledger book are in 1867, and most are in 1869-1871.

In the spring of 1867 Simeon began recording the brickyard transactions in an account book.[121] Most entries are scarcely legible with very deviant spelling but the hand writing seems to match Simeon's letter to Brigham Young. He appears often to be accepting commodities and work in exchange for bricks. He also notes beginning and ending of employees' service. Many of his employees seem to have boarded with him. There are also charges and payments to Henry (Walter Henry), and Lonzo (Alonzo) Atwood.



A page from Simeon's account book.

On April 21, 1867, Simeon's son George Noble Atwood was baptized in the South Cottonwood Ward by Aaron Nelson.

Simeon did not waste much time re-marrying after he split up with Fanny. He was sealed to an unmarried 30 year old Scottish immigrant named Margaret Monteith[122] in the Endowment House on May 4, 1867, right after Margaret received her personal endowment. She had arrived the previous September by ox cart.[123] In Scotland when Margaret was 23, her mother died, leaving her to raise two younger siblings. Margaret worked in a factory and also taught school. She joined the Church at the age of 27 and came to America with her brother William, who had reputedly sold his sheep to finance their passage. I do not know exactly how long Simeon's marriage to Margaret lasted, but it was less than two years later that their sealing was cancelled. In a brief biography written by a grandson,[124] she is said to have received a proposal for marriage from a polygamist named Simeon Atwood, but she rejected both the marriage and the principle of polygamy. This seems to be untrue on at least one count. Her marriage to Simeon is documented. Simeon was technically a polygamist, having briefly lived simultaneously with Melissa and his second wife, Maria Thornton,[125] but he was probably living alone when he married Margaret. In 1870, Margaret Monteith married Peter McOmie, with whom she had six children and lived for the rest of his life.[126]

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[121] In the possession of Clinton M. Harris, a descendant of Doctor Atwood.

[122] Margaret was actually born in Ireland, but the family moved to Glasgow sometime after she was 10.

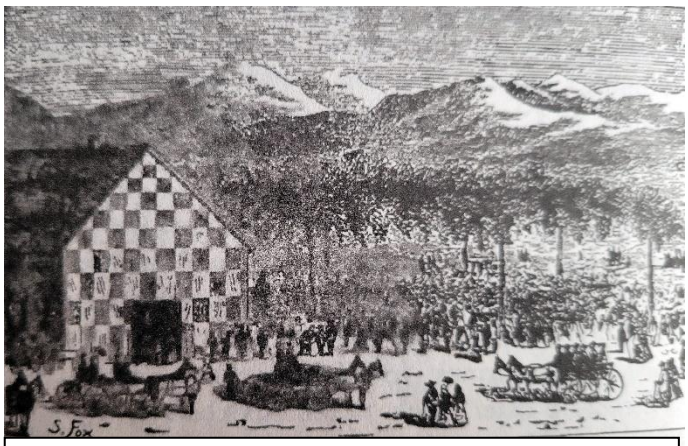
[123] Endowment House Sealings; 1867-1869; FHL film 183396, Special Collection; Book E, p. 23, #9416; Simeon Atwood, and Margaret Monteith, born 12 July 1840, Gorteclan, Tyrone, Ireland, were sealed 4 May 1867, sealing canceled 5 Apr 1869.

[124] Armond Rex Bigler, in Margaret's memories in *FamilySearch*.

[125] There is much confusion regarding this relationship among the family historians of the Atwood family, some of whom have confounded Margaret Monteith with Margaret Richardson, whom Simeon married about a decade later.

[126] Salt Lake Temple record: S/C FHL film 184785; Book 4J, #1065; Margaret Monteith, born 12 Jul 1938, Gorteclan, Tyrone, Ire., died 29 Nov 1916, married 12 June 1870 to Peter McOmie.

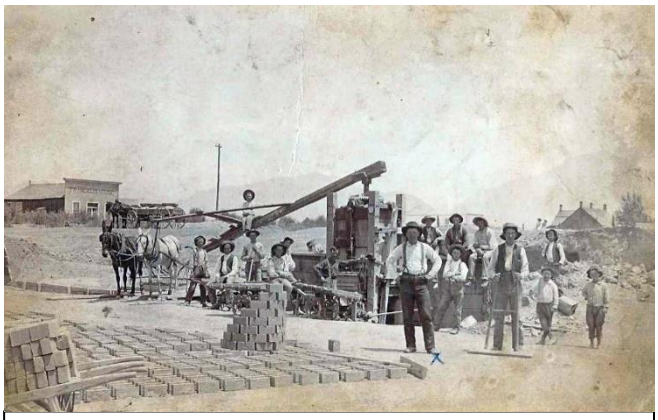
Simeon's father, Hezekiah Atwood II died in National Military Home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on February 29, 1868. They had not seen each other for nearly a decade.



Engraving from Eliza Ann Young's book, *19th Wife* depicting Brigham Young's visit to Cottonwood.

In the spring of 1868 Brigham Young made an official visit to South Cottonwood which the Atwood family would certainly have attended. As was his custom he arrived in a train of carriages headed south on the state road, accompanied by one or two of his wives, his son Brigham Jr., and the available counselors and apostles. He was met outside of town by a gala procession of the community, who had spent considerable time and resources to prepare for the occasion. Accompanied by a brass band, they marched to greet to prophet grouped under banners reading Fathers in Israel for the adult males and Mothers in Israel for the adult females. The young men were Defenders of Zion, the young women Daughters of Zion—Virtue, and the little children were Hope of Israel. Prominent ward members were assigned to host the dignitaries, with the prophet taking the best accommodations. That evening there was a dance, and then on Sunday morning and afternoon services were held in a bowery built for the occasion, as they had no meeting house capable of holding everyone.[127]

In June 1868 an article ran in the *Salt Lake Daily Telegraph and Commercial Advertiser* that Bro. Simeon Atwood of South Cottonwood had called on them and informed them that:



Atwoods at work making bricks.

> …he and his son have designed and constructed a brick machine, worked with two levers by hand. A span of horses or mules grind the clay, which falls into the press. The working of one of the levers forms the brick, and the other fetches the brick out, six at a time. The machine is capable of readily turning out from 1,000 to 1,500 brick an hour. Bro. Atwood's place is on the state road,[128] between the two Cottonwoods, and he believes he has the material to make first-class brick, he having made about 50,000 from the same clay last fall, which proved to be good and durable. It took six men to run the machine. It could produce 10,000 bricks per day.[129]

[127] Ann Eliza Young, *Wife No. 19*, Benediction Classics 2010, p. 426-430

[128] Modern address would be 150 Vine Street.

[129] I estimate that a 1,200 foot one story house would require about 15,000 to 20,000 bricks.

The Transcontinental Railroad was completed at Promontory Point, Utah on May 10, 1869.

For some reason, Simeon's and Alonzo's households were missed by the 1870 census. Simeon had three children living at home. Amelia was 17, and I assume that she was managing the household. Doctor was 19, working in the brickyard and hauling granite for the temple. George Noble was 13. Alonzo had two wives and eight children, all under 12.[130] Although Alonzo was missed in the census, it was not because he was living somewhere else, since his daughters Melissa and Ellen were baptized in the South Cottonwood Ward on June 8, 1870.

Sarah and William

As of June 1, 1870, the official census day, Simeon's second son, William, was living in the 12th Ward in downtown Salt Lake City just two doors from Porter Rockwell and not far from Eliza Webb, Brigham Young's newly married 19th wife, who provided the story of Brigham's visit to Cottonwood. William was listed as a carpenter, probably working on the Tabernacle. When his first wife, 18 year old Laura Wade, died two months after their marriage in November of 1867, he had promptly married her younger sister Sarah. The census also recorded a toddler named Oralie.

Twenty-nine year old Walter was in living in Cottonwood. He had been one of the first people in Utah to file a claim on the family farm after the Homestead Act was passed in 1862.[131] To "prove up" on the claim, he had first lived in a dugout, and then steadily improved the 160 acres that lay between modern 4900 and 5300 South and Main Street and 3rd East. He was building a mansion with 18 rooms made of the brick the family manufactured, but probably had not moved in yet (or was extremely modest), since he evaluated the house he was living in at $100. Most of his neighbors were declaring from $200 to $4,000.[132] Later Walter filed on 160 acres at Dry Creek south of Murray which is now called Crescent. He eventually bought out his brothers for the brickyard after Simeon died in 1889 and operated it until 1911.

Walter Henry Atwood's mansion.
https://collections.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s67083kk

Next door to Walter's house lived his brother Charles, also in a $100 dwelling, with his wife Louisa, two young boys, and a servant named Anna Beard. On the other side lived Joshua Bennett and his wife Isabella. Joshua was the son of Fannie, Simeon's former third wife.

The census showed Walter living with his number two wife, Julia and three small children. His first wife Diademia and her two little girls were living in Payson along with a nine year old boy named Hyrum

[130] Together, Alonzo's two wives would eventually accomplish 27 births between them.
[131] Walter was granted title to his homestead claim on March 10, 1870.
[132] The house was still standing in 1944 when it was featured in a newspaper article stating the building was 80 years old, which would indicate the house was finished in 1864.

Smith Flanders, the adopted son of Diademia's brother Albert William Stickney. Walter showed up in that household as well, but under his middle name as Henry Atwood, brickmaker. I think he may have temporarily separated his two wives for polygamy persecution reasons, but by the next year they were all living together in the mansion.

Charles and his wife were living in South Cottonwood next door to Walter with two young boys and another on the way, but soon moved to Springville.

In Simeon's ledger book there are multiple entries referring to a Robert Pixton through October 28. On September 14th, credit for wood 125 x 4 inches and five entries for cash received. Robert Pixton Sr. was in Taylorsville for the census but maintaining a home for his second wife in Leeds. Robert Pixton Jr. was 20 years old. He married Simeon's daughter Amelia Melissa seven months later on April 4, 1871. I believe that the wood mentioned in the ledger was for renovating the Pixton house in Taylorsville to prepare for the marriage. There are multiple entries for sales of wood in 1870 to the Pixtons.

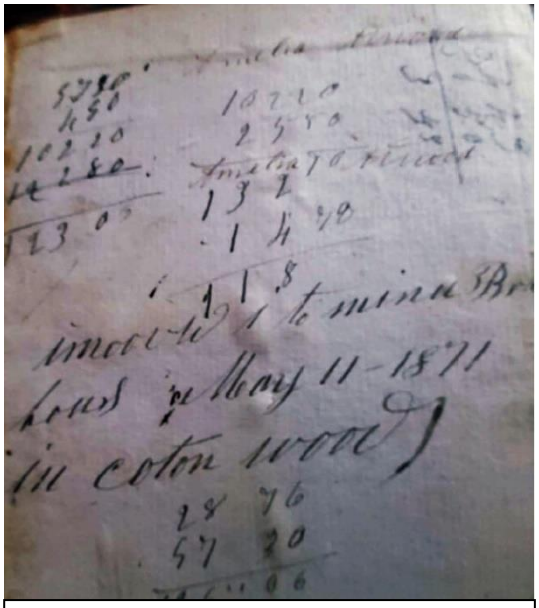
Amelia and Robert Pixton wedding picture

That year the No. 9 Pony Express station in South Cottonwood called Traveler's Rest was replaced by a train station, just one year after Promontory Point. It made brickmaking for the smelting operations possible and profitable. To take advantage of the train station the Atwoods moved their brick operation nearer to it and added coal and lumber to their brick business. During the next few years hundreds of workers from Greece, Sweden, and Eastern Europe came to South Cottonwood to work in the smelters.[133] Soon railroad spurs connected the town with Park City, Alta, and Bingham. The Salt Lake City Southern Railroad reached the Point of the Mountain by March 1872. This, of course, was a great shot in the arm for the Atwoods' brick business.

Many of the houses in Cottonwood were built of bricks made by the Atwoods, including William's and Walter's homes. These were the two brothers who settled permanently in Cottonwood. The bricks were said to be superior in quality to any others available, and when smelters were built near the railroad crossing, the bricks were used for many of the chimneys. That is when they changed the name of the company from Atwood Brick Company to Utah Fireclay.

[133] The town changed its name to Murray after the post office was named after the territorial governor and Civil War general Eli Murray in 1883.

An interesting notation appeared in Simeon's account book on May 11, 1871: "imoved into minn Br. House on May 11-1871 in Coton wood." The name Amelia Atwood is written twice on that page and a bunch of figures. Amelia would have been 18, and I think she moved on that date into Walter's house from Simeon's. By this time, Doctor was probably out on his own. George Noble, now 14, may have moved with Amelia to make room for employees boarding with Simeon. George was definitely living with Walter by the 1880 census.



Amelia's note in account book.

The following month Charles B. Atwood was appointed postmaster of South Cottonwood.

In October, Brigham Young was arrested upon an indictment charging him with lewdly and licentiously cohabiting with sixteen different women. Owing to illness, he was allowed to remain at his home overnight.[134]

Simeon appeared in the *Deseret News* four times in 1873. The first involved the report in April of a new district schoolhouse in Cottonwood, "built of a splendid article of brick, made close to the site of the building, by Mr. Simeon Atwood. Messrs. Atwood and Sons manufacture their brick by an ingenious machine, which is the invention of Mr. Atwood, senior, and is very effective." The second involved his testifying in court to identify the man who had stolen two mules from his stable. On Independence Day Simeon was one of the speakers at the celebration in Cottonwood at the new schoolhouse which was attended by about 700 people. The American flag was hoisted up a new 70 foot high liberty pole while a salute of musketry was fired. The ceremony was followed by a banquet served on five 40 foot long tables followed by dancing until midnight. In October, the paper reported that Simeon had set a broken bone for a young boy, stating that he often did medical procedures free of charge.

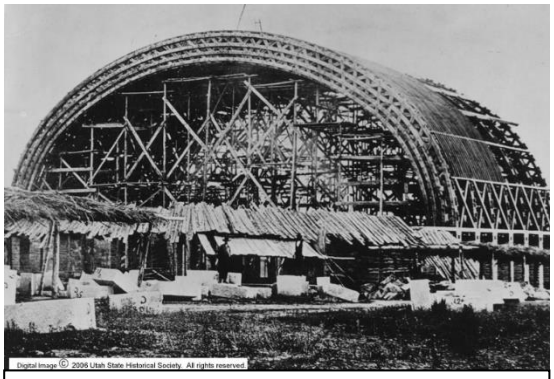
In January 1874 the new school house in South Cottonwood Ward was dedicated. Simeon Atwood made an address as a member of the school board.[135]

That winter the *Deseret News* reported that a new surgical operation which had never before been attempted west of New York City was performed on George Atwood, Simeon's son, who "had been suffering for over two years with running sores on both legs, caused by excessive skating(!). An incision five inches long and two deep was made in the right leg, just below the knee, on the outside, from which about three inches of bone was removed, and not a single drop of blood was lost during the operation."[136] The doctors intended to repeat the operation on the other leg as soon as the patient had

[134] *Michigan Argus* newspaper of that date.
[135] Parker, footnote 447.
[136] *Deseret News*, 25 Feb 1874, Page 9.

regained sufficient strength to bear it.[137] Little is known about George's life after this ordeal. It seems unlikely that he had been able to do heavy work such as was surely required for brickmaking. George never married and probably lived the rest of his life with Walter Henry. He died in South Cottonwood at the age of 39.

At the October General Conference in 1875 the Salt Lake Tabernacle was dedicated after 12 years of construction.



Tabernacle in 1863 when Atwoods worked on it.

On Halloween Simeon and a woman named Elizabeth Atwood were rebaptized in the South Cottonwood Ward. This is the first indication that Simeon had taken on another wife. They must have been married by a justice of the peace or their bishop, for their sealing in the Endowment House did not take place until October 14, 1876.[138]

Elizabeth (Betty) Dick Coats, age 45, had been living in nearby Taylorsville with her parents. She was born near Glasgow, Scotland in 1830 and baptized a Mormon in 1858, although her husband of six years did not join the Church. Her father didn't join the Church in England, but when he was in his 60s, he and her mother and youngest brother with his young wife and child immigrated to America in 1868 without Betty, assisted by the Perpetual Immigration Fund.[139] Then Betty lost William, her husband of 19 years, to a mining accident in England when he was run over by a loaded coal wagon, and she had previously lost seven children who died between the ages of one and seven. In 1872 Betty came to America with her four surviving children[140] the modern way via steamship and railroad, following her parents, who had arrived four years earlier. She brought her children with her into Simeon's household—her 21 year old son Archibald, 19 year old Jessie, 13 year old Isabella, and Robert, who was five.

Simeon and Betty were sealed in the Endowment House on October 14, 1876.[141] The same day, Simeon was sealed to a deceased woman[142] named Mary Anderson, born in Lanark, Scotland, with Betty standing in as proxy. Since Mary was also from Lanarkshire Scotland, I assume she had been a friend or relative of Betty's. Two days earlier Simeon had been in the Endowment House doing proxy baptisms

[137] It is hard to imagine that such an operation could have been done without anesthesia. The use of ether for a limb amputation was first reported December 21, 1847. Queen Victoria famously was given chloroform for the birth of Prince Leopold in 1853 and Princess Beatrice in 1857. Nitrous Oxide "laughing gas" was introduced around 1868.

[138] Batch M183401; Sheet 1183, SS 14 Oct 1876 Endowment House.

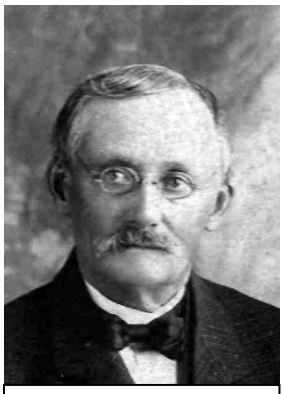
[139] Betty's father died in in Salt Lake City in 1875 before her marriage to Simeon.

[140] According to her son Robert's biography Betty was accompanied by her late husband's parents.

[141] Batch M183401; Sheet 1183, SS 14 Oct 1876 Endowment House.

[142] It was not uncommon in those days to seal deceased young women to worthy priesthood holders.

for his own deceased family members: his father Hezekiah Sr., his brother Hezekiah Jr.,[143] and his son Stephen.[144]



Charles Atwood

Sometime around 1877 Charles Barber Atwood moved his family of six to Spanish Fork, apparently the first of the Atwoods to do so, and on July 11, 1877, he was rebaptized there along with his two sons, Charles Schuyler and Albert Benton (ages 12 and 10), who received their initial baptism. In November his fifth son Leslie was born in Spanish Fork. Charles and his oldest son reported their occupations in the following census as brickmakers, so evidently the family business followed him. Charles' younger brother, Doctor, also moved to Spanish Fork around that time with his wife Mary and two little girls. He too was listed in the census as a brickmaker.

Doctor Atwood

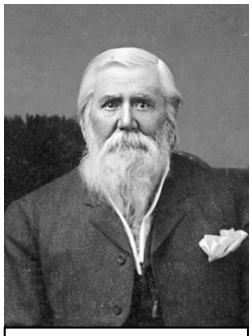
That year Joshua Bennett, the son of Simeon's ex-wife Fanny Bolton, quit his job after he was "leaded" from the fumes of the smelter and moved to Deseret, near Delta. Fanny remained in Cottonwood until at earliest the 1880 census, but some time before 1900 she joined Joshua in Millard County, where she died at the age of 89 in 1908.

Less than three years after her marriage to Simeon, Betty died in South Cottonwood from "inflammation of the bowels" at the age of 48. When she died, probably only one or two of her children were living in Simeon's home. The youngest, seven year old Robert, was taken in by his 21 year old sister Jessie and her husband Stewart Tanner. Isabella, who was 14 appears to have lost her way after her mother's death. She is not to be found in the 1880 census. When she married James Asher in 1884 she was six months pregnant with the child of another man, whom the couple raised as an only child. Betty's oldest son Archie, age 23, was probably living independently.[145]

[143] This proves that Hezekiah Jr. existed, that he reached at least the age of eight, and he died before 1876.
[144] Over 300 proxy baptisms were recorded in the Endowment House per day during the fall of 1876. Over the 25 years of the font's use for proxy baptisms, there were 134,053 recorded, (Lisle G. Brown, *Temple Pro Tempore*, Journal of Mormon History, Vol. 34, Issue 4, 2008) a rate of about 28 per day if the font was used every weekday. I would like to know the reasons for this late surge in volume. The font was destroyed in November 1889 when President Wilford demolished the Endowment House under federal pressure over polygamy.
[145] In 1880 he and his mother's adopted baby brother, John Dick, were living together in a large boarding house at Rush Lake, four miles south of Tooele, working in a smelter associated with silver mining.

Walter Henry Atwood

Around June of 1879 Simeon moved permanently from Cottonwood, leaving the brickmaking business to Walter Henry, who eventually bought all of his brothers out of the business. One family writer claims that Simeon was called to Spanish Fork by Brigham Young, which seems unlikely, since Brigham had died August 29, 1877, and Spanish Fork was a well-established community, not needing colonization. More likely he was following his sons Charles and Doctor, and he made the move at about the same time as his oldest son, Alonzo, who moved both of his wives to Salem, which is just four miles south of Spanish Fork.



Alonzo Atwood

Simeon moved to the town of Benjamin, which is about five miles east of Spanish Fork, and bought a ranch owned by William Warren. Initially he build a two-room lumber house lined with adobes, but later he built a three-room house. Both were always kept white. He kept bees and had a two-acre apple orchard with many varieties.[146] About this time Simeon married once again,[147] a Scottish woman named Margaret Robertson, who had a four year old girl named Jane. The marriage must have been before September 7, 1879, when according to Spanish Fork Ward records, Margaret was rebaptized under the surname of Atwood by Frederick Lewis and confirmed by Philip Sykes.

Spanish Fork City Hall 1874
Courtesy Utah Division of State History

Relatively little is known about Maggie, as she is called in one source,[148] although of all his wives, she was married longer to Simeon than any but Melissa. According to Church records she was baptized in April 1861, probably in Dundee, Scotland, which is close to her birthplace of Longforgan, where she was born March 24, 1831. I do not know when she immigrated to the Salt Lake Valley, but it was before November 4, 1872, when she received her endowment. A year later she married a Scotsman named James McIntosh Stewart[149] in the Endowment House and moved into his home in Wellsville in Cache County. James had recently lost his first wife, Robena Glenn after the delivery of their eighth child.

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[146] From Lula H. Atwood Beck, memories in *FamilySearch*.

[147] I'm not sure whether they were married in Cottonwood or in Spanish Fork.

[148] I'll use the nickname from here on, to help distinguish her from Margaret Montieth, with whom Margaret Richardson had been often confused.

[149] He also went by Stuart. James Stewart was from Kirkliston, near Edinburgh, about 56 miles from Maggie's birthplace. He and his first wife, Robina, had immigrated to Salt Lake City in 1854, where he had been a blacksmith for Brigham Young at the same time that Robina was working for one of Brigham's wives as a housemaid. They were married in the Endowment House in 1855 and with their first three children moved to Wellsville around 1862, where he operated a blacksmith shop near a stream called Little Creek.

Maggie, who at the age of 31 had never been married, suddenly became mother to five girls and two boys[150] between the ages of 10 months and 15 years. Two years after her marriage to Stewart, Maggie had her first and only child, Barbara Jane, on November 6, 1875. Sometime in the following four years their marriage fell apart, and she left with her little girl. Other than her rebaptism, the only source for Maggie's marriage to Simeon is the 1880 census in Spanish Fork, where she is listed as his wife with four year old Jane as his stepdaughter. There were several families of Robertsons in Spanish Fork, which may explain how Maggie landed there after she left James Stewart. These Robertsons also immigrated from the Dundee region of Scotland, although from about 28 miles north of Maggie's birthplace, and immigrated at least a decade before she did.

Simeon Ernest Atwood, the eight year old son of Charles Barber, was baptized in Spanish Fork by Zebedee Coltrin on June 2, 1881. This is interesting to me, since Zebedee and Simeon had lived at the same time as children in Strongsville, Ohio over 60 years earlier. It was that fall that Simeon, Alonzo, and Charles made their deposition before Charles D. Evans, a notary public, that they had witnessed a speech given by Abraham Lincoln.[151] It appears that they were motivated by growing resistance to polygamy from federal officials in Salt Lake City.[152]

A curious newspaper notice in the *Territorial Enquirer* in Provo appeared on May 20, 1887, which read as follows:

> To All Whom it May Concern: This is to notify all persons interested that I will not hereafter be responsible for any debts or obligations incurred by my wife, Margaret Atwood. Simeon Atwood. Spanish Fork, Utah.

Simeon and Maggie were still married, but not for long. By November 17, Simeon had paid $5 in alimony three times.[153] Another marriage was over.

It is hard to track Maggie and Jane. Jane was 11 and Maggie was 56 and never remarried. At some point they moved to Salt Lake City, where Jane was working as a servant when she died on Aril 13, 1894. She was 17 and said to have died in childbirth, although her death certificate identifies her by her maiden name of Stewart.[154] Maggie died April 22, 1908, at the age of 76 of kidney disease after 11 days in LDS Hospital.

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[150] Robena's oldest boy Robert had been accidently killed when he was 13.

[151] See pages 27 and 28 in Chapter 4.

[152] The following summer Rudger Clawson became the first polygamist to be tried under the Edmunds Tucker Act by a stacked jury of twelve Gentiles. (Note that according to the census of 1880, there were 120,283 Mormons, 14,136 Gentiles, and 6,988 apostates in Utah.) In 1885 the Church had advised polygamous husbands to live openly with only one wife. This would have put pressure on Alonzo, who would soon move away from Utah County. In March 1887 the Edmund Tucker Act was amended and passed this time with teeth, closing loopholes that had helped polygamists to avoid prosecution. There followed a rash of imprisonments.

[153] Div. 17 Nov 1887, Utah County Court Records, film 482922.

[154] "Utah Deaths and Burials, 1888-1946", database, FamilySearch, Barbara Jane Robertson Stewart, 1894.

About the time that Maggie left Simeon, his son Charles moved to Vernal[155] as did Alonzo.[156] Doctor and his family remained in Spanish Fork.

Simeon was briefly married once more, this time to Permelia Ann Roberts, a widow from Payson, on August 18, 1888, in the probate court in Provo. Simeon was 74 and Permelia was 69. Her former husband Benjamin Betz, a blacksmith, had died three years earlier and Permelia was living with her stepdaughter, Mary Ann Betz Harper, and her large family. Permelia and Benjamin Betz had entered a second marriage for both of them in Virginia in 1858. The couple converted to Mormonism in Virginia in 1871 and were endowed and sealed in Salt Lake City on June 9, 1873, having immigrated sometime in the interval. They came to Payson sometime before 1880.

Simeon Atwood died June 6, 1889, at the age of 74 in Spanish Fork. He had been trying to capture a swarm of bees and fell seven feet from a tree, breaking his femur, and he died four days later. The death register gives the cause as "blood poisoning."[157]

Permelia died in 1898 and was buried in Payson.

Alonzo lived with his multitude of children in the Uintah Basin for the rest of his life, dying there in 1908 at the age of 70. Charles died in Vernal in 1932. William lived out his life in Murray and died there in 1923 at the age of 84. Walter Henry Atwood also died in Murray that same year. Doctor died in Spanish Fork in 1914.

Amelia Atwood Pixton is my second great grandmother. Her husband Robert Pixton Jr. died in Taylorsville in 1916. Fifteen years later Amelia died in West Jordan at the home of my great grandparents, James Alphonso and Parylee Pixton Bateman the age of 77.

Amelia and Robert Pixton family ca. 1898. Parylee far left on center row.

[155] *Builders of Uintah* published by DUP of Uintah County in 1947, pages 30-31. The Spanish Fork Ward membership book reads (Rec.; 979.224/S3 K2sw; p 13.), "Removed to Ashley Fork 24 Oct 1887."

[156] This was sometime between February 1888 when his twins were born in Salem and when Edna was baptized in Wasatch Stake August 5, 1888. The other twin, Etna Pearl, died in Vernal. By one account (in Leonard's memories) Alonzo moved Mary and her family there first, and Elizabeth's family a few years later.

[157] I wonder whether it might have been a fat embolism to his lungs, now known since the advent of CT scanning to be a common fatal event after a femoral fracture.

I have come to greatly respect my third great grandfather Simeon Atwood through my research for this story, although one important question about him remains unanswered. While I am glad to have been able to learn much about his various wives, I regret that I have not been able to determine exactly how long Simeon was with Maria Thornton. This seems important, for it would define how involved Simeon was with polygamy. On one hand, it is possible that the two of them never even lived together, a possibility that would assuage my feelings of sorrow for Melissa, his first wife and my ancestor, who was still living when Simeon and Maria were sealed. The fact that little to nothing has been written about Maria by Simeon's family biographers suggests to me that they did not live together long if at all, but absence of a record does not prove absence of a person, and it is technically possible that Maria was still married to Simeon during his brief time with Fannie Bolton Bennett, and even with Mary Monteith. Simeon's absence from the 1870 census makes it hard to settle the issue, which would be solved by the number of wives in his household. In any case, it is true that Simeon sired no children from any of his seven wives except Melissa, so if he was a polygamist, he never had to manage multiple families.
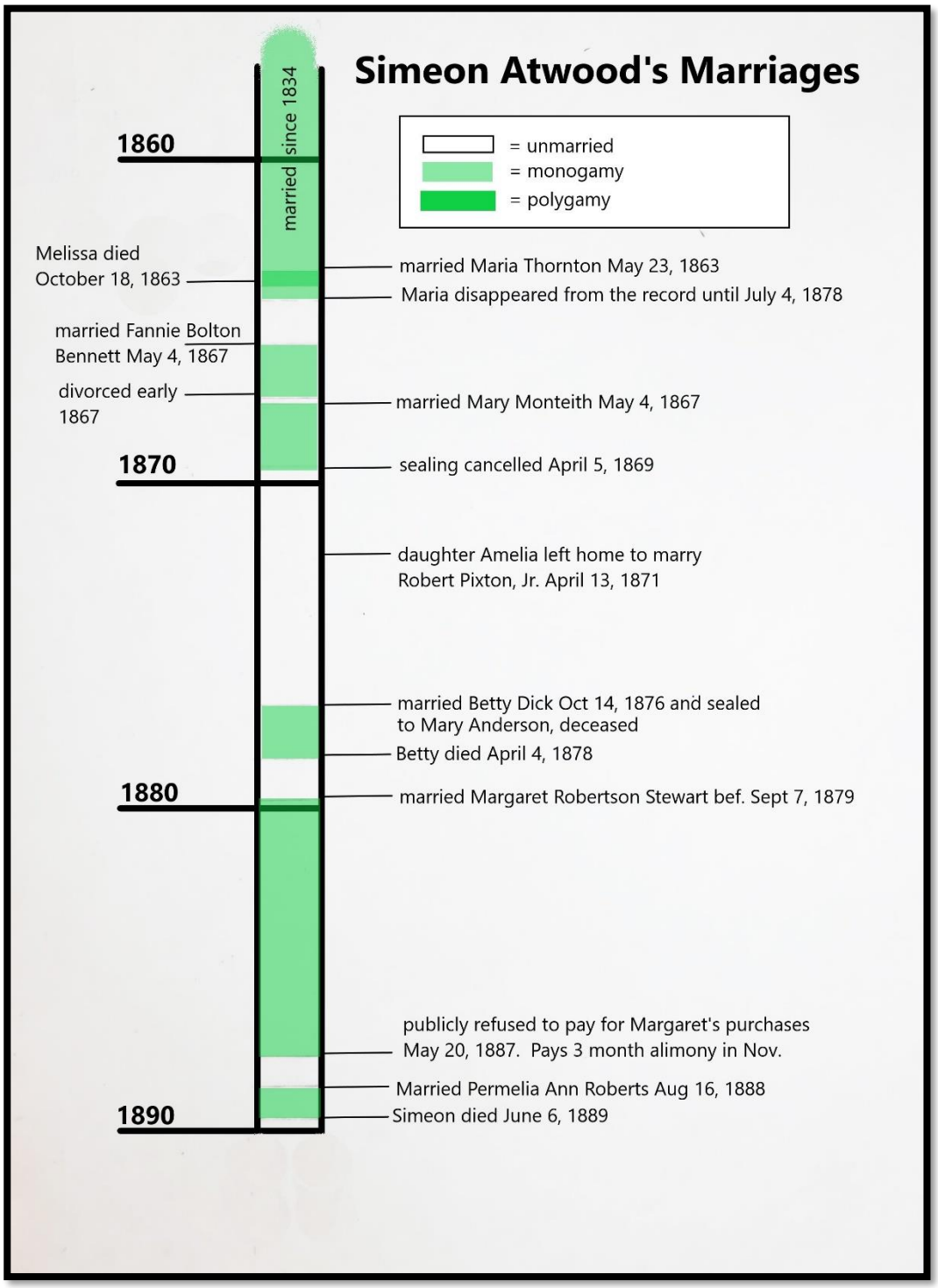
Chart of Simeon's Marriages